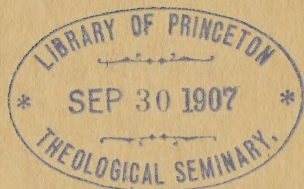




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# THE INCARNATION

BY THE REVEREND  
H. V. S. ECK, M.A.

Rector of Bethnal Green,  
and Rural Dean



Third Edition

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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TO  
THE VENERATED MEMORY  
OF  
WILLIAM BRIGHT  
D.D.  
CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH  
AND  
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE  
OF THE STRENGTH OF HIS TEACHING  
AND THE INSPIRATION OF HIS ENCOURAGEMENT



## EDITORS' PREFACE

THE object of the Oxford Library of Practical Theology is to supply some carefully considered teaching on matters of Religion to that large body of devout laymen who desire instruction, but are not attracted by the learned treatises which appeal to the theologian. One of the needs of the time would seem to be, to translate the solid theological learning, of which there is no lack, into the vernacular of everyday practical religion; and while steering a course between what is called plain teaching on the one hand and erudition on the other, to supply some sound and readable instruction to those who require it, on the subjects included under the common title 'The Christian Religion,' that they may be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.



The Editors, while not holding themselves precluded from suggesting criticisms, have regarded their proper task as that of editing, and accordingly they have not interfered with the responsibility of each writer for his treatment of his own subject.

W. C. E. N.

D. S.

## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE alterations in this edition are only in a very few instances more than verbal. The author has thankfully availed himself of the opportunity of adopting one or two suggestions which appeared to him very valuable, but he has not felt himself free to make any considerable alterations. He would, however, be glad to justify himself with regard to certain criticisms which some very kindly reviewers have made on his book, and for this purpose the preface seems to be the most convenient place.

In the first place, he ventures to think that those who have suggested a more controversial treatment of certain parts of the treatise, in the interests of those who cannot accept the Faith of the Church on the subject of the Incarnation, have somewhat overlooked the purpose of the whole library of which this volume forms a part. Its intention, as the writer understands it, is rather to afford instruction in

the Faith for those who already accept it, than to meet the objections of those who do not. This he says without for a moment wishing to under-estimate the difficulties of those who, for whatever reason, so it be an honest one, do not accept the 'historic faith' as it has come down to us in the Catholic Creeds; still less would he wish to imply that their difficulties are not worthy of the most careful consideration and of the most heartfelt sympathy on the part of those who 'without all doubt' believe in JESUS as the LORD.

Secondly, to those who have complained of the absence of any 'adequate treatment of the *Κένωσις*,' the author would venture to emphasise his own words in the concluding section of the third chapter. He felt that it was better not to treat those very difficult problems at all than to treat them inadequately. To have treated at all adequately such questions as the Temptation, and the 'increase in wisdom,' and the human knowledge of our LORD, would have required a much larger treatise. And the author cannot too strongly express his conviction that those questions are not such as can most profitably be considered before due consideration has been given to the doctrine of the Incarnation itself. A firm grasp of the doctrine itself is, he feels,



the best preparation for a consideration of the problems arising out of it.<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, it would be hardly necessary to notice the strange misrepresentations of what is said in the chapter on the Holy Eucharist, were it not that they testify to a very widespread confusion of thought on that subject which cannot be too often attacked. One reviewer says, 'Mr. Eck says that the act of consecration so alters the bread and wine,' etc. As a matter of fact, the author has been at some pains to point out that the analogy of the Incarnation would lead us to believe that the outward is not altered by the inward, that as the GODHEAD did not in the Incarnation annihilate or absorb the Manhood, so neither in

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the question of our LORD'S Consciousness, the Bishop of Worcester says, 'First then, this is not a question which ought to be encountered on the road towards orthodoxy. Its logical place is, I venture to think, that in which I have tried summarily to treat it in the Bampton Lectures of 1891, *i.e.* after faith in the Incarnation has been established. . . . Secondly, the question of our LORD'S Consciousness is not—*granted His infallibility as a teacher*—one which ought to harass the ordinary life of faith. Thousands of pious Christians have believed that the eternal "Son of GOD for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate, and was made man, and was crucified, and rose again," and on the basis of this faith have read their Gospels and taken the real human experience and sympathy of our LORD for truth in simple trust, without any inquiries into the condition of our LORD'S Consciousness seriously arising. . . .'—*Dissertations*, pp. 72, 73.

the Eucharist does the Inward Part or Thing Signified annihilate or absorb the Outward Sign. It is one thing to say that in virtue of consecration the Outward Sign becomes, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the veil and the vehicle of the Inward Part or Thing Signified; it is quite another to say that by the act of consecration the Outward Sign is altered or changed into the Inward Part.

Fourthly, though the point is a much less important one, the author's 'uncertain language' with regard to the Second Council of Nicæa has been somewhat severely criticised by one of his reviewers. The defence of his 'uncertain language' seems to him to lie in the fact of the extreme uncertainty of the language of many great writers with regard to the œcumenicity of that council. The balance of evidence seems to the author to be on the whole in favour of its œcumenical acceptance, but it cannot be denied that it has not met with the same unwavering certainty which has characterised the reception of preceding councils.

Lastly, the author would take this opportunity of expressing his gratitude for the great kindness with which his attempt to write clearly on a deep subject has been received. And he would wish in addition to express his sense of his own

indebtedness for whatever is good in his book to the help and encouragement which he himself has received from the words and writings of others; his especial gratitude to the late Bishop of Durham and to the present Bishop of Worcester he desires here to acknowledge; he has already in the Dedication striven to express, though words cannot express, what he owes to the late Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford.

BETHNAL GREEN, *Lent*, 1902.



# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE INCARNATION THE ANSWER TO MAN'S NEEDS	1
II. THE INCARNATION AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.	
A. THE GODHEAD OF OUR LORD . . .	16
III. THE INCARNATION AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.	
B. THE MANHOOD OF OUR LORD . . .	45
IV. THE INCARNATION AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.	
C. THE VIRGIN-BIRTH . . .	67
V. THE IMPLICIT FAITH OF THE CHURCH IN THE ANTE- NICENE PERIOD . . . . .	96
VI. THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE.	
A. AT THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA . . .	122
VII. THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE.	
B. AT THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE	144
VIII. THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE.	
C. AT THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS	165
IX. THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE.	
D. AT THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON . . .	184



	PAGE
X. THE INCARNATION AND THE ATONEMENT . . .	205
XI. THE INCARNATION AND THE HOLY EUCHARIST . . .	221
XII. THE INCARNATION AND COMMON LIFE . . .	237
NOTES—	
A. On the Genealogies of our LORD . . .	254
B. On the Heresies of the First Three Centuries . . .	259
C. On General and Œcumenical Councils . . .	260
D. On the Patriarchates . . . . .	262
E. On the Antiochene Schism . . . . .	264
F. On the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds . . .	266
G. On the title Θεοτόκος . . . . .	270
H. On the 'Communicatio Idiomatum' . . . . .	272
I. On the Convocation of General Councils . . .	273
J. On the Incarnation and the Fall . . . . .	274
K. On Uncovenanted Grace . . . . .	275
INDEX OF SUBJECTS . . . . .	277
INDEX OF PASSAGES IN HOLY SCRIPTURE REFERRED TO . . .	281
INDEX OF COUNCILS, AUTHORS, AND BOOKS REFERRED TO . . .	285

## CHAPTER I

### THE INCARNATION THE ANSWER TO MAN'S NEEDS

Opportunitate temporis, quando voluit, quando sciebat, tunc natus est.—*S. Augustine.*

SOME words of explanation may perhaps be called for to justify the inclusion of such a subject as that of the Incarnation among the volumes of a library which claims to deal with matters of practical theology. It might perhaps be thought that such a subject was too theological to allow of practical treatment, that it was a question rather for theologians than for men not primarily concerned with questions of theology. If so, the justification is to be found in the title of the present chapter: it is as the answer to man's highest and deepest needs that the union of Godhead and Manhood in the Incarnation becomes a matter of supreme practical interest and importance to all mankind.

The great fact of the Incarnation looks both

ways: just as we have come to reckon the years as leading up to it and as dating from it, so too we may look upon man's history: all that came before the coming of CHRIST was gradually preparing for that tremendous and unique consummation, all that has followed after it looks back to it as the point of departure for a new order of things. So we may regard the Incarnation both as the consummation and crown of the past, and as the starting-point of the future. It is rather as the former that we are to consider it in the present chapter.

There are three ways chiefly in which we may set ourselves to study the Incarnation as the consummation of the ages of man's history before our LORD came; three ways chiefly in which we may contemplate the Incarnate LORD as *Christus Consummator*. We may think of the Incarnation as the culmination of God's Revelation, and as the recapitulation of Mankind in the Second Adam, and as alike the answer and the key to the enigmas and the mysteries and the aspirations of man's being.

1. The Incarnation is, firstly, the culmination of God's Revelation. 'God Who at sundry times and 'in divers manners spake in time past unto the 'fathers by the prophets hath in these last days 'spoken unto us by his Son.'<sup>1</sup> Without dwelling

<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 1. See Bp. Westcott *in loc.*

now on the contrasts implied in these words—the contrast between what is partial and what is absolute, between temporary and final, between the prophets and the Eternal Son—we may dwell upon the fact that the Author of both revelations was One and the Self-Same. It was GOD Who spoke of old to the fathers by the prophets, it was GOD Who has spoken, and is speaking, to us at the end of the days of the elder Dispensation in the Person of the Son; both alike, however much in other ways we may contrast them, were the Revelation of GOD to man. Revelation, as distinct from natural religion which it pre-supposes,<sup>1</sup> may be said to be concerned with two great subjects—the unveiling of the Being and Character of GOD, and the unfolding of the plan of man's salvation. Through patriarch and lawgiver, through psalmist and prophet, GOD was speaking to man, revealing to him the Divine Being and Character, making known to him the high human destiny and the conditions of its attainment; but this revelation was gradual and progressive; it was in so far as, and up to the point that, man was able to bear it. GOD did not, so to speak, blind man by turning full upon him the rays of the unapproachable light; He led him gradually out of the darkness, both moral and intellectual, in which he was

<sup>1</sup> See Paget, *Introd. to Hooker Bk. v.*, pp. III ff.

groping. It was this accommodation,<sup>1</sup> this gracious condescension, of Almighty God to the moral and intellectual capacities of His creatures, dealing with them as they were able to bear it, which is the explanation of what is sometimes spoken of as the imperfect morality of the Old Testament. God was stooping down to whisper in man's ear, to lead him by the hand,<sup>2</sup> giving to him not the best code of morals which He could give but the best which man could receive, not the clearest revelation of Himself which could be given but the clearest which man could bear. We have to remember that Revelation is not only the Voice of God but the Voice of God to man, and that consequently, not less in the intellectual than in the moral sphere, it is adapted necessarily to man's capacity to receive it. The gradual and progressive nature of Revelation, so regarded, is thus seen to be a proof of the wisdom and mercy and goodness of its Author, Who, knowing what was in man, dealt with him as he was and not as he was not, gradually educating him under

<sup>1</sup> The Greek Fathers frequently use the word *oikonomia* to describe this gracious accommodation of God to man's imperfection and infirmity. The word means in its original sense the management of a household, and seems to suggest that exact provision for the needs of each member of the household on the part of its head which is based on an exact knowledge of the needs of each.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xxxi. 32.

the Old Dispensation up to the point at which he could receive the fuller and clearer light, both intellectual and moral, of the New.

If we ask wherein lay the fuller and clearer Revelation of the New Dispensation, wherein, in other words, the Coming of the LORD in the flesh was the consummation of the Revelation which had gone before it the answer will be that it consists mainly in the fulfilment—that is to say the filling out—of the earlier and partial Revelation in both those subjects with which it is concerned—the Being and the Character of GOD, and the destiny and vocation of man.

OUR LORD Himself claimed to reveal the Father. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'<sup>1</sup> And so S. Paul declares that 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD' was given to us 'in the Face of JESUS CHRIST.'<sup>2</sup> This Revelation was a fulfilment and in no sense a contradiction; the unveiling of GOD's mysterious and awful Being, as Father Son and Holy Ghost, is not contrary to the Revelation given under the Old Dispensation. It was not until Israel had been cured for ever by the bitter lesson of captivity and exile of all tendency to polytheism and idolatry that the truth of the Unity of the GODHEAD, insisted on in the Old Testa-

<sup>1</sup> S. John xiv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.



ment, could be supplemented and completed by the other truth of the Trinity of Persons revealed in the New. So too as to the Character of God : the Old Testament Revelation of God as almighty and eternal and self-existent is completed and not contradicted by the Revelation of His Fatherhood and of His Love in the New. In fact the Revelation of God, both as to His Being and as to His Character, given to man by the Eternal Son was foreshadowed and foretold at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets.

And it is not otherwise with the Revelation of man's own vocation and destiny : the consummation of the elder Revelation by the new so far as it concerns man is exactly expressed in the words of S. Paul. God 'hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.'<sup>1</sup> Man's calling and destiny was not arbitrary or dependent on chance, but according to the purpose and grace of God. It was in pursuance of a gracious plan that God created

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.

man in accordance with the design which He Himself had formed 'before the world began.' As it is expressed in the Book of Wisdom, 'God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity.'<sup>1</sup> And it was this gracious purpose of God, partially disclosed indeed under the Elder Dispensation, which was 'made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST.' That image of God, in which man was first created and which had been so blurred and distorted by the Fall, was once more made manifest in all its clearness in Him Who was the express Image of the Father; and that eternal life, for which man was created and which was only dimly and at intervals apprehended by psalmist and prophet, was 'brought to light' by the Gospel of the Eternal Son.

And yet further, the Incarnation was the consummation of the Revelation not only of man's high vocation and destiny, but also of the means whereby, and the conditions whereunder, he might attain to it. The Sermon on the Mount was the consummation and the fulfilment of the old law; the old law of positive commands had been the schoolmaster adapted to the requirements of man's moral infancy and childhood; the new law, not destroying but

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom, ii. 23.

fulfilling the old, supplied man with the principles which, now that he had come to man's estate, he was capable of receiving, and in the light and strength of which he might himself be enabled to fulfil the Law.

2. The Incarnation may be considered, secondly, as the recapitulation of mankind in the Second Adam. The expression is that of S. Irenæus, who speaks of the Word of God when He became incarnate as 'recapitulating into Himself' 'the long development of humanity,'<sup>1</sup> and is based of course on S. Paul's teaching as to the Second Adam. The Incarnation was in this sense a recapitulation of mankind, 'the point in which mankind finds its unity.'<sup>2</sup> Mankind had, as it were, lost its centre and its archetype. The Eternal Son took upon Himself human nature in order that He might 'gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.'<sup>3</sup> In Him man was to find what he had lost in Adam; in Adam man looked back to an inheritance of ruin and despair and death; in CHRIST, the Second Adam, the new Head, man was to find recovery and hope and life. He

<sup>1</sup> S. Iren. *Adv. Hæres.* v. 1, τὴν ἀρχαίαν πλάσιν τοῦ Ἀδὰμ εἰς αὐτὸν ἀνεκεφαλαιώσατο: iii. 18, 'Longam hominum expositionem in Seipso recapitulavit.'

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 8 (ed. 1885).

<sup>3</sup> S. John xi. 52.

was, in His own phrase, 'the Son of Man,' a title which expresses not alone His perfect humanity, but also the perfection of His representation of humanity. For He was not merely a son of man, not merely a man, but the Son of Man, Man representative and archetypical of the whole race. In the eternal wisdom and providence of God He was so born of a Virgin Mother that He might represent not merely one family, one class, one race, one nation, but the whole of that long development of humanity which transcended all national and local limits, and went back through all the centuries of man's history to its beginning in the creation of Adam. Thus the representative aspect of the Incarnation is expressed by our LORD Himself in the title 'Son of Man'; and so too it is expressed by S. Paul in all those passages in which he speaks of the work of the LORD Incarnate as analogous to though contrasted with the work of the First Adam. 'The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the LORD from heaven.'<sup>1</sup> 'As by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.'<sup>2</sup> 'As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive.'<sup>3</sup> 'As by

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. xv. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 19.

<sup>3</sup> I Cor. xv. 22.

man came death, by man came also the Resurrection of the dead.’<sup>1</sup> These passages present both a contrast and an analogy—a contrast between the acts of the First and of the Second Adam and between the results of those acts, but also an analogy between their representative and far-reaching character. Our LORD’s relation to the human race, as S. Paul teaches, was at least as vital, at least as momentous, at least as universal, at least as far-reaching in its scope, as was that of Adam.

So the Incarnation was the consummation of the past in the sense that in it mankind found once more its unity and its centre and its head.

3. Once again, the Incarnate LORD is Christus Consummator as supplying alike the answer and the key to the enigmas and the mysteries and the aspirations of man’s being. As the Catholic doctrine of the Fall supplies an answer, for us the one adequate answer, to all those strange and perverse affinities with and consentings to what is base and low which man perceives within himself, so the Incarnation, as setting forth the essential worth and dignity of man’s nature, is the key to all those other affinities and aspirations which exist within us in such strange juxtaposition with affinities the

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. xv. 21.

very reverse.<sup>1</sup> The manifestation of the Eternal Son amidst the circumstances of our earthly lives, as recorded in the gospels, is the call to man, like the call to the Angel of the Ephesian Church in the Apocalypse, to remember not only the fall but that from which he is fallen.<sup>2</sup> It is the reminder to him of that first estate, so lofty, so dignified, so unspeakably glorious, in which he was first created ; it tells him that those high and noble purposes of which he is sensible, those aspirations after all that is pure and good and true, those refusings to be satisfied with what is merely transitory and partial, are the necessary outcome of that nature which as it came from the hand of God was pronounced by Him to be very good ; whilst, on the other hand, those other sensations which he experiences, those pitiful grovellings after base and sordid things, those tremendous capacities for evil-doing, that strange forgetfulness of his eternal destiny—all these are the outcome not of human nature as God created it but of that human nature over which the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Newman, *Dream of Gerontius*—

‘O man ! strange composite of earth and heaven !

Majesty dwarfed to baseness ! fragrant flower

Running to poisonous seed ! and seeming worth

Cloaking corruption ! weakness mastering power !

Who never art so near to crime and shame,

As when thou hast achieved some deed of name.’

<sup>2</sup> Rev. ii. 5.



trail of the serpent passed in the day when ‘through the envy of the Devil death entered into the world.’<sup>1</sup> It is surely not the least among the blessings which come to us through meditation on the Incarnation of our LORD that we are thereby recalled, from so many false ideas as to the state of human nature upon which whole systems of theology have been based, to the truth which is of such vital importance to practical life that human nature is not bad in itself, but is weakened by the sin which we have added to it.<sup>2</sup> Our LORD took upon Himself human nature as God created it, and wore it without adding to it that which Adam added to it when he fell, so that henceforward He might make it possible for us to receive from Him ‘through the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost’<sup>3</sup> a fresh start in a nature which has been purified by being taken up into personal union with the GODHEAD. The Incarnate CHRIST then is the answer and the key to all those questionings and enigmas which present themselves to our view as we set ourselves to study human nature in its dignity and in its weakness.

CHRIST is this answer and key, because from His

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom, ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> See Bp. Andrewes, *Devotions*. ‘Two things, O LORD, I recognise in myself, Nature which Thou hast made, Sin which I have added.’ Cf. a passage in Charles Kingsley, *Good News of God*, pp. 187, 188.

<sup>3</sup> S. Tit. iii. 5.

life we learn what truly pertains to the perfection of man's nature and what is in fact alien from it; because in Him there is expressed all that God meant human nature and human life to be, all that He is calling man to be, 'according to His purpose and grace'; and because in Him we see the consummation and combination of all that was so truly good and great in patriarch and psalmist and prophet in the ages before He came in the flesh.<sup>1</sup>

Postponing to another chapter any consideration of the evidence on which our belief in the Incarnation is based, and assuming for the moment the truth of the traditional belief of the Church that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was for our sakes made Man, we may surely confess that so great a miracle was at least no mere uncalled for wonder without any moral justification for its occurrence; that, given the state of the world and of society and of human life, it is at least not incredible that God Who created the world should have intervened to arrest its ruin; and that such an event as the Incarnation supposing it to be true, however beyond all human expectation or conjecture, how-

<sup>1</sup> In *The Discipline of the Christian Character* Dean Church traces the gradual unfolding of the 'Mind of CHRIST' in the progressive revelation of the Old Testament, shewing how everything that was best in the saints of the old covenant found at last its full and complete expression in the Character of the Son of Man.

ever transcending all human thought, was yet at least most marvellously fitted for the satisfaction of man's needs, whether as the completion of that Revelation which, great and glorious as it was, yet pointed on to a Revelation greater and more glorious still,<sup>1</sup> or as the recapitulation of humanity in a new Head in Whom it might once more find what it had lost, or as the key to so much which without it is mysterious and perplexing in man's own being.

Even though, in other words, the Incarnation was an event unique and tremendous beyond our power to describe it, it was at least not unreasonable, considered as a Divine intervention, in view of man's condition when it took place, nor yet, granted that such an intervention was at least not unreasonable, would it be easy to conceive a way in which God could have intervened more calculated to satisfy the human needs which cried out for His intervention. We have got a long way towards understanding God's ways of dealing with man when we have realised that He does not work miracles merely for the sake of working them, merely as a Wonderworker, but that His miracles are always worked in pursuance of a moral purpose. That moral purpose is very clearly to be discerned,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 7 ff.

by all who have eyes to see it, in our LORD'S own miracles; most of all is it to be discerned in that miracle of miracles which ushered in the miracles of the New Dispensation, in the holy Incarnation itself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Even the heathen poet perceives the impropriety of the needless introduction of the Deity into human affairs in a play or poem:

‘Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
Inciderit;’

Horace, *De Arte Poetica* 191. If we may so speak with reverence, the circumstances of the world at the time of our Saviour's Birth were undeniably such as to constitute ‘dignus Vindice nodus.’

## CHAPTER II

### THE INCARNATION AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### A. *The Godhead of our LORD.*

This is light ;—where dimness lingers,  
Faith can wait till shadows flee ;  
And life's riddles less perplex us  
When the Truth has made us free ;  
Yea, the Truth and Light Incarnate—  
For if CHRIST we truly scan,  
Him we trust in we must worship  
Word made flesh, and GOD made Man.

—*William Bright, D.D.*

BEFORE we consider the witness of the New Testament to the Person of our LORD we shall do well to lay stress upon the consideration with which the last chapter ended, the consideration of God's miraculous working as involving always and necessarily a moral purpose. We have no right to conceive of God working miracles such as would imply a contradiction of His Moral Character, nor again does the Bible at least give us any warrant for supposing that GOD ever works meaningless or

uncalled for portents, merely for show as we might say, or merely to strike terror into men.<sup>1</sup> We may approach the consideration of any miracle by first asking, What was the special need for this miracle, what was the lesson it was intended to convey, what was the moral purpose which lay behind it? If we apply this test at the outset to that miraculous intervention of God which we are to consider, we shall find that at least it was neither an uncalled for nor an inappropriate intervention. There was that in the circumstances of the world and of human life which cried out for something to break in upon those circumstances, and cut off the entail of the past, and bridge over the chasm which that past had been widening and deepening between the Creator and His creatures. It was not merely that a climax had been reached in man's wickedness

<sup>1</sup> Miracles, *e.g.*, of such a nature as were ascribed in mediæval times to the Blessed Virgin. Her legendary history as represented in the mutilated carvings round the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral depict her as interfering, by miracles, in interests actually opposed to those of morality and justice. Meaningless and useless miracles, mere θαύματα or τέρατα, such as befit the stories of Oriental Magic, are never ascribed to GOD in the canonical Scriptures; of such a kind would be Matthew Arnold's instance of 'the change of a pen into a pen-wiper.' Notice the use in the Gospel of S. John of the word σημεῖον to describe our LORD's miracles. Miracles which were mere τέρατα our LORD never worked, τέρατα which were σημεῖα as well He did. See Abp. Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, ch. i.



and consequent separation from His Maker, though, with the burning words of S. Paul and of S. Athanasius before us, not to call in heathen testimony,<sup>1</sup> we may well feel that man's sin and his alienation from God were indeed such as to cry out for God's interference; but the moral purpose of the Incarnation is to be found not less in the conscious need on the part of mankind at its best for some such manifestation of God, than in the voiceless cry of mankind at its worst, unconscious of its need, its misery, and its sin. We are to find the need for the Incarnation in the pathetic longings of the Psalmist 'athirst for God,'<sup>2</sup> and of Job seeking for some daysman who might lay his hand upon both creature and Creator<sup>3</sup> and so bring them together, and of the best of the heathen world 'feeling after God if haply they might find Him,'<sup>4</sup> not less in all

<sup>1</sup> See, *e.g.*, Rom. i. and S. Ath. *De Incarn.* c. v. It has been pointed out that the dark colours in which the Apostle paints the condition of mankind in its separation from God are not peculiar to Christian writers. See Gore, *Epistle to the Romans*, vol. i. p. 74. And Dr. Liddon says, 'Modern unbelief complains that S. Paul has characterised the social morality of the Pagan world in terms of undue severity. Yet S. Paul does not exceed the specific charges of Tacitus, of Suetonius, of Juvenal, of Seneca, that is to say of writers who, at least, had no theological interest in misrepresenting or exaggerating the facts which they deplore.' — *Bampton Lectures*, p. 142 (ed. 1885).

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xlii. and throughout the Psalter.

<sup>3</sup> Job ix. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xvii. 27.

these than in the awful wickedness which had gone on increasing upon the earth since the day that sin first entered in through the door of man's rebellious will setting itself against the Will which had called him into being.

The Incarnation, we believe, was God's own answer to the needs of mankind at its best and at its worst. It was further the means through which God the Blessed TRINITY saw fit to repair the mischief of the Fall, the means through which that Atonement might be wrought by which alone God could pardon man's transgression without at the same time compromising His own intense hatred of sin, His own awful Righteousness and Holiness: so the Incarnation was the fulfilment of that long tale of prophecy which, beginning with the promise to Adam of 'the Seed of the Woman,' had gone on increasing in fulness and clearness until the prophetic utterance ceased with Malachi, the last prophet of the Hebrew Canon.

It is then with a conviction of this background of moral purpose, so to call it, a conviction of a real sense of need calling for the direct interference of God in the course of man's history, that we approach the consideration of the Incarnation as it is set before us in the pages of the New Testament.

The subject may be taken to involve three main

questions, (1) Who He was Who became incarnate, (2) What it was which He became, (3) The mode and the meaning of His Incarnation. The answers to all these questions may first be stated in the familiar and venerable terms in which the Catholic Church has always and everywhere stated them, and we may then proceed to examine the Church's answers in the light of the canonical Scriptures, reminding ourselves in passing that such a method of procedure is in accordance with the ancient and Catholic view of the relation of the teaching Church to the Holy Scriptures which she interprets.<sup>1</sup> The Church in the authoritative statements of her Creeds and Councils ever implies a reference to the Scriptures for the proof of those things which she delivers out of them. Her authority though very real and very definite is yet not despotic or tyrannical, nor does she demand an unreasoning submission on the part of her children. So understanding the authority of the Church, many have found the pathway to light and knowledge through acceptance of her authoritative teaching.<sup>2</sup> It is

<sup>1</sup> See for a very clear explanation of the relation of the Church to the Bible, Gore, *Roman Catholic Claims*, ch. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the words of S. Augustine, 'Unde igitur exordiar? ab auctoritate an a ratione? Naturæ quidem ordo ita se habet, ut cum aliquid discimus, rationem præcedat auctoritas.'—*De Moribus Eccl.* ii. 3.

both for this reason, and also because it is convenient to have a clear statement before us as a basis on which to work, that we shall first state the answers to our questions in the ancient terms of the Catholic Creeds and Councils, and then proceed to examine them in the light of Holy Scripture.

In answer to the first question, 'Who He was Who became Incarnate?' the Church teaches that He was 'the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not made, Being of one Substance with the Father, By Whom all things were made'; that He was 'God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds . . . Perfect God . . . Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead.' He it was Who appeared on earth in the substance of our flesh, and Who, so appearing, and assuming 'the characteristic properties' of the Manhood, yet in no wise laid aside 'the characteristic properties' of the GODHEAD.<sup>1</sup>

The proof of these statements is to be found, first, in our LORD's own witness to Himself as it is

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is that of the 'Definition' of the Council of Chalcedon which, having been accepted by the whole Church, is of œcumenical authority. The phrase of the Fathers of Chalcedon, *ἰδιότης ἐκατέρας φύσεως*, is the Greek equivalent of the Latin expression of S. Leo in his famous 28th Epistle (commonly known as the Tome), 'proprietas utriusque naturæ.'

recorded in the Holy Gospels, and, secondly, in the witness of His immediate followers as we find it throughout the books of the New Testament.

## I

Our LORD's witness to the truth of His own Divinity may be said to be the witness of a great claim, a claim which we may consider as, mainly, threefold—the claim to absolute authority to teach; the claim, at least implied, to moral perfection; the claim to equality with the Eternal Father.

With regard to the claim to absolute authority to teach, we may recall the impression which this characteristic of His work made upon the Jews at the very beginning of His Ministry, 'for He taught them as one having authority and not as the Scribes,'<sup>1</sup> and indeed as we set ourselves to study His teaching we are disposed to go yet further and to say 'nor even as the prophets.' In Him the common formula of the prophetic message 'Thus saith the LORD' gives place to the formula with which the Gospels have made us familiar, 'Verily I say unto you.' Further still we find in Him the claim not merely to teach but even to revise the old Law, not indeed by way of abroga-

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. vii. 29.

tion but by way of fulfilment; thus He introduces His 'fulfilment' of definite precepts of the old Law, as well as His abrogation of the Rabbinic teaching, by the phrase 'It was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you.'<sup>1</sup> When we remember Who it was by Whom the precepts of the Decalogue were spoken 'to them of old time' and the circumstances of awe and terror in which they were spoken, we realise something of what that claim implies in the mouth of Him Who says, commenting upon those sacred and ever-binding precepts, 'But I say unto you.' It implies, surely, either a right to deepen and broaden the precepts of the Moral Law commensurate with His Who gave it at the first, or an arrogant self-assertion which has no parallel in the pages of either Testament. And so it is all the way through our LORD's teaching; there is everywhere that tone of calm and stern authority which, account for it as we may, cannot be evaded. It would be easy to multiply instances, yet no number of instances could ever convey the impression which the simple reading of the Gospels must inevitably produce on the mind of every serious and honest reader.

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. v. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43. The R.V. is doubtless right in translating *tois ἀρχαίοις* *to them of old time* rather than *by them*, as it is in the A.V.



Secondly, our LORD bears witness to His own Divinity by the claim, at least implied, to moral perfection. There is no single confession of sinfulness anywhere hinted at in what our LORD says of Himself. We have contrasted our LORD's authoritative 'I say unto you' with the 'Thus saith the LORD' of the Old Testament prophets; the contrast is no less significant in respect to the claim to moral perfection. Listen to the greatest and holiest of the Old Testament prophets exclaiming as he contemplates the awfulness of JEHOVAH and the dignity of the message intrusted to himself, 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips';<sup>1</sup> listen again to the holy apostle, as the time of his martyrdom draws nigh, confessing himself the chief of sinners;<sup>2</sup> and then contrast the words of prophet and apostle with those words which on their lips would have been nothing less than blasphemy, 'Which of you convicteth Me of sin?'<sup>3</sup> And all the way through from end to end of the Gospels it is the same; no hint of sinfulness, no admission of anything which the Prince of this world can claim as his own, no cry for pardon or for mercy, no contrasting for a moment the unworthiness of the messenger with the dignity of the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. vi. 5.<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15.<sup>3</sup> S. John viii. 46, R.V.

message ; the whole of our LORD's teaching implies, even where it does not actually claim it in so many words, a moral perfection and freedom from sin such as 'is, at the very least, suggestive of a relation to the Perfect Moral Being altogether unique in human history.'<sup>1</sup> If it does not suggest this, at least let us be sure of it that it does not suggest human sanctity, for the nearer any man approaches to saintliness the further does he feel himself to be from moral perfection, the more does he feel himself compelled to re-echo the passionate confessions of sinfulness of an Isaiah or a S. Paul. If the holiness of the LORD had differed only in degree and not in kind from that of the holiest of the saints, we should have found in His sayings something of that sense of infirmity and sin, something of that sense of inadequacy to the awful holiness of His message, which we find again and again in theirs ; yet as a matter of fact, account for it as we may, we find no trace whatever of such a sense in anything which He said.

And, thirdly, He claimed, as His enemies at least clearly perceived,<sup>2</sup> equality with the Father 'as touching His GODHEAD.' There are, first, those passages in which our LORD speaks of His own

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> S. John v. 18 ; x. 33.

pre-existence, such as when He said ‘Before Abraham was, I am,’<sup>1</sup> or as when He spoke of Himself as ‘the Bread which came down from heaven,’<sup>2</sup> or as when He said ‘I proceeded forth and came from GOD.’<sup>3</sup> These passages indeed, and others like them, could not, if they stood alone, be said to prove all that the Church teaches as to our LORD’s co-eternity with the Father; they might even, supposing they stood alone, be consistent with the Arian belief in a pre-existence which was neither eternal nor truly Divine. But they do not stand alone; for, secondly, there are all those many sayings recorded in the Gospels which not less by their tone than by their actual words imply the claim to an equal GODHEAD with the Father; the claim to be Himself life,<sup>4</sup> and to be the source of life to them that believe in Him,<sup>5</sup> to be the Vine from which alone the life-giving sap is derived into the branches,<sup>6</sup> to be the Door through which alone men can find access to the Father;<sup>7</sup> the claim to forgive sins not merely, as the earthly priesthood conveys forgiveness, in virtue of a Divine commission, but in His own right;<sup>8</sup> the proffer of Himself

<sup>1</sup> S. John viii. 58.

<sup>2</sup> S. John vi. 33-35.

<sup>3</sup> S. John viii. 42.

<sup>4</sup> S. John xiv. 6.

<sup>5</sup> S. John xi. 25, 26.

<sup>6</sup> S. John xv. 5, 6.

<sup>7</sup> S. John x. 9.

<sup>8</sup> S. Matt. ix. 2-6; S. Mark ii. 10; S. Luke v. 20, 23.

as the object of men's faith and trust;<sup>1</sup> the assurance that to honour Him is to honour the Father,<sup>2</sup> to hate Him is to hate the Father,<sup>3</sup> yes even to see Him is to see the Father;<sup>4</sup> the promise that His Voice shall penetrate even into the realms of the dead carrying with it life and resurrection;<sup>5</sup> the command to baptize, with a formula which puts the Son on a level with the Father and the Holy Spirit, including Himself in the unity of the Sacred and Awful NAME;<sup>6</sup>—these are passages, and there are many others like them, which can only be explained on the supposition that He Who is the subject of them is indeed what the Church has ever believed Him to be, 'equal to the Father as touching His GODHEAD.'

The conviction that such is the truth will be brought about, as we have already observed, not by the multiplication of passages from the Gospels but by a sincere and diligent reading of the Gospels themselves. We cannot remind ourselves too often that, try as we will, it is impossible for any attempt to state the truth as to our LORD's Person not to fall immeasurably short of the truth itself. The holy Gospels convey the truth as truly as it can be

<sup>1</sup> S. John xiv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> S. John xv. 23.

<sup>5</sup> S. John xi. 25.

<sup>3</sup> S. John v. 22, 23.

<sup>4</sup> S. John xiv. 9.

<sup>6</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

conveyed, yet there is something truer still, even the LORD Himself; and it can only be by letting the very words of the Gospels sink down into our hearts and minds that we shall arrive at even an approximate idea of the truth of the Divine Personality of Him Who is enshrined in their pages. The lines of evidence which have been so briefly touched upon are only meant to serve as sign-posts to indicate ways along which our own thoughts may travel, not to serve as proofs, taken by themselves, of the truth as to which we are seeking conviction—the truth, namely, that our LORD, as the Evangelists portray Him, is indeed very and eternal God. The only alternative to that belief is the alternative suggested by the famous dilemma, ‘CHRISTUS aut Deus aut homo non bonus.’<sup>1</sup> If, in plain words, He Who made those tremendous claims, claiming to teach with absolute authority even to the extent of revising the precepts of the Law as it was given on Sinai, claiming to be Himself free from all taint of sin, claiming to be the object, equally with the Father, of man’s love and honour and trust and worship, if He were not GOD—then we can only think of Him, as we should think of any merely human teacher who dared to make such claims, as guilty of

<sup>1</sup> The source of this epigram does not seem to be known. See Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, note 5, p. 238.

blasphemy and self-assertion in the worst degree. We have only to transfer some of our LORD's words to the lips of His saints in order to understand their significance, in order to perceive their entire incompatibility with our ideas of merely human goodness or holiness. Our LORD's own words to the Rich Young Ruler seem to deprecate the use of the word 'good' as addressed carelessly to Himself by one who only thought of Him as a human teacher. 'On what grounds,' so he seems to say, 'are you addressing me as good Master. There is only One Who has any real right to that title, that is God.' Our LORD might have added, as we believe, had He so willed, 'And I am God.' Whatever else the words mean, and their interpretation is not without difficulty, they must at least mean that our LORD refused the title of good as addressed to Him by one who only thought of Him as a human teacher.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to see how we are to avoid the same refusal, if, thinking of our LORD as mere man or indeed as anything short of God, we yet believe that He spoke the words which the Evangelists represent Him as speaking. CHRISTUS aut Deus aut homo non bonus. 'Thoughtful men generally

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark x. 18. S. Ambrose comments, 'Quid me dicis bonum quem negas Deum? Non ergo se bonum negat, sed Deum designat.'

view with distrust the dilemma as a form of argument. . . . But after all there are dilemmas, though they may not be many, the force of which grows upon us the more we consider them ; the dilemma based upon the claim of JESUS CHRIST is one of these.’<sup>1</sup>

## II

We turn from our LORD’s own witness to the truth of His Divinity to that of His immediate followers, S. Peter, S. Paul, and S. John.

That witness, as we find it throughout the New Testament, is the witness of those who came through the long and painful discipline and probation of doubt and uncertainty, some of them from actual unbelief, to recognise and to admit the fulness and majesty of their Master’s claim, and, having recognised it and admitted it, to follow it out to its logical consequence in a life of worship and of service which not even death could vanquish or dismay. The Gospels do not present us with the spectacle of men blinded by enthusiasm ready to believe anything at the moment it is presented to

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 16. The statement of Mgr. Félix, *Conférences de 1864* (quoted by Bright, *Hymns and other Verses*, p. 5), may be compared with the dilemma quoted above, ‘La question de Sa Divinité, c’est la question de Sa Sincérité.’



them; rather we see men whose upbringing in the devout monotheism of the Jewish Church made them exceedingly slow to admit any such claims as those of which we have been thinking, men who seem as though they could not recognise what their Master was teaching them about Himself,<sup>1</sup> men who were only too ready when the supreme disaster came to abandon all those hopes and convictions which had at last been gradually dawning upon them. Certainly the Apostles to whose testimony we are now appealing started with prejudices the very opposite to those of men already disposed to accept any claim on our LORD's part in advance of the claim to be 'a teacher come from God.' Conviction came to them only very slowly, and it was only when the Resurrection had rekindled the wavering hopes which the events of the preceding week had staggered, and had added to them the moral certainty of absolute conviction that the Apostles stand forth as witnesses to all the world of that truth of their Master's GODHEAD to which they had come by such slow and painful steps.

It is the nature of that witness that we must now briefly consider.

(1) S. Peter's testimony is to be found in his

<sup>1</sup> S. John xiv. 8-10.

speeches recorded in the Acts,<sup>1</sup> in his own Epistles, and in the Gospel of S. Mark which, according to an ancient tradition borne out by internal evidence, is based upon S. Peter's teaching.<sup>2</sup> In the speeches in the Acts we should notice especially the emphasis on the power of our LORD's victorious Name; thus, in that Name S. Peter commands the first converts to be baptized;<sup>3</sup> in that Name he bids the lame man rise and walk;<sup>4</sup> that Name, he declares, through faith in that Name, has given strength to the helpless cripple;<sup>5</sup> than that Name there is no other under heaven given among men whereby they can be saved;<sup>6</sup> through that Name forgiveness of sins is given to every one that believeth.<sup>7</sup> So he speaks of the Risen LORD as the very Prince of Life,<sup>8</sup> and of the impossibility of His being holden by death.<sup>9</sup> GOD has exalted Him to His own Right Hand;<sup>10</sup> GOD has made Him LORD and CHRIST,<sup>11</sup> Prince and

<sup>1</sup> For S. Peter's speeches, spoken we may notice to very different audiences, see Acts i. 15-22 (spoken to his fellow-disciples); ii. 14-36 (to the Jews); iii. 12-26 (to the people in the Temple); iv. 8-12 (to the Rulers); v. 29-32 (to the Council); x. 34-43 (to the Roman Cornelius).

<sup>2</sup> Papias (quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39), a Phrygian Bishop of the 2nd century, is the earliest authority for this connection of S. Mark's Gospel with S. Peter. He calls S. Mark 'the interpreter of Peter,' ἐρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iii. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Acts iii. 16; iv. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Acts iv. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Acts x. 43.

<sup>8</sup> Acts iii. 15, Ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς.

<sup>9</sup> Acts ii. 24.

<sup>10</sup> Acts ii. 33; v. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Acts ii. 36.

Saviour;<sup>1</sup> He has been received into Heaven itself until the times of the restitution of all things;<sup>2</sup> by God's decree He is judge of living and departed;<sup>3</sup> 'He is LORD of all.'<sup>4</sup>

If we turn to the writings of S. Peter we find exactly the same attitude towards the Person of the Saviour which we find in his speeches. To consider now only the First Epistle;<sup>5</sup> in the opening words JESUS CHRIST is placed on a level with the Father and the Spirit;<sup>6</sup> He is regarded as the fulfilment of prophecy;<sup>7</sup> more than once His Blood and His Death are spoken of as of redemptive efficacy;<sup>8</sup> He is gone into heaven and is seated on the Right Hand of God;<sup>9</sup> angels, and authorities and powers are subjected to Him;<sup>10</sup> He is sinless;<sup>11</sup> He is the Way of approach to the Father;<sup>12</sup> He is the goal of our faith,<sup>13</sup> the cause of our rejoicing,<sup>14</sup> the theme of our praises,<sup>15</sup> the object of our love.<sup>16</sup>

Lastly in the Gospel of S. Mark, S. Peter's teaching has handed down to us a conception of the

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Acts x. 42.

<sup>4</sup> Acts x. 36.

<sup>5</sup> It is not intended to imply that there is any doubt as to the genuineness of the Second Epistle, though it is true that the Church only after some hesitation admitted it to its position in the Sacred Canon.

<sup>6</sup> 1 S. Pet. i. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ib.* i. 10, 11, 20; ii. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* i. 2, 19; ii. 24; iii. 18.

<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* iii. 22.

<sup>10</sup> *Ib.* iii. 22.

<sup>11</sup> *Ib.* ii. 22.

<sup>12</sup> *Ib.* ii. 5; iii. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Ib.* ii. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ib.* iv. 13.

<sup>15</sup> *Ib.* iv. 12, 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ib.* i. 8.

Work and Person of the LORD JESUS which is most majestic and most commanding. It begins with the significant introduction 'The beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST the Son of God,' and while never for a moment concealing, or even keeping in the background, the true humanity of the LORD Incarnate, it sets Him before us as emphatically that which its opening words declare Him to be.<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that in the subject-matter which is common to the first three Gospels we have what was in substance the catechetical teaching of the Apostles of which S. Luke speaks in the preface to his Gospel;<sup>2</sup> if so, it is clear that in their very earliest teaching, not less than in that which is later as represented by S. John, we have a conception of the Divine Personality of our LORD which entirely bears out the dogmatic teaching of the Church.

(2) It is impossible here to discuss the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, its harmony with the other three, or its internal unity with other writings in the New Testament bearing S. John's name. The reader can only be referred to the works of the learned writers who have made a careful study of

<sup>1</sup> Note the following passages in S. Mark: i. 11; i. 22; i. 27 (*κατ' ἐξουσίαν*); ii. 5, 10; ii. 28; iii. 11; iv. 39; viii. 27-29; viii. 38; ix. 2-7; xiii. 26; xiv. 22-24; xiv. 62; xv. 39.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lk. i. 1-4, *περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων . . . περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων.*

the subject,<sup>1</sup> and must be asked to accept their testimony as to its genuineness and authenticity. Three things especially should be borne in mind in reading S. John's Gospel, as accounting, at least to a great extent, for the differences which must strike us between it and the Gospels of the Synoptists: (i) its obviously supplementary character, omitting what would be already well known through the writings of the other three, and supplying accounts of incidents and discourses which they omit; (ii) the difference of the circumstances in which it represents our LORD, much greater prominence, for example, being given to His relations with the leading and learned classes at Jerusalem and His discourses with them;<sup>2</sup> and (iii), S. John's own circumstances at the time of writing, leading him to give prominence to those aspects of the truth which

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, Lect. v.; Bp. Westcott in *Speaker's Commentary*, Introd. to S. John's Gospel; Sanday, *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, ch. xix. Dr. Sanday arranges his evidence for the Johannine Authorship under four heads, proving from internal evidence (i) that the Author was a Jew, (ii) that he was a Jew of Palestine, (iii) that he was a contemporary of the events which he records, and, (iv), that he was an eye-witness of those events. All these lines of evidence taken together fit in with the undeviating tradition of the Church that the Fourth Gospel was the work of the Apostle S. John. Cf. Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*; Watkins in Smith and Fuller's *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 1739-62 (ed. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Affording an answer, at least to a great extent, to the objection of M. Rénan, 'Si JÉSUS parlait comme le veut Matthieu, il n'a pu parler comme le veut Jean.'

were specially calculated to meet the particular errors prevalent at the end of the first century.<sup>1</sup>

S. John's witness to our LORD's Divinity is to be found stated in the prologue to his Gospel (S. John i. 1-14). In those verses S. John gives two titles to our LORD which together express His eternal relation to the Father, and which at the same time supplement and correct each other. Those two titles are 'the Word' and 'the Only-Begotten Son.' S. John's use of the first title is derived almost certainly from Jewish rather than from Alexandrian sources, and to the Jewish Targums rather than to Philo we must go for its meaning as used by S. John.<sup>2</sup> Philo uses the title much more as an abstract term, whilst 'in the Targums or early Jewish paraphrases on the Old Testament the "Word" of JEHOVAH is constantly spoken of as the efficient instrument of Divine action, in cases where the Old Testament speaks of JEHOVAH Himself. "The Word of God" had come to be used personally as almost equivalent to God manifesting Himself, or God in action.'<sup>3</sup> We see at once that this is the way in which S. John uses the title in the prologue. 'The Word was God';

<sup>1</sup> Especially the Gnostic form of error of which Cerinthus was the leader.

<sup>2</sup> See Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 63 ff., 229. Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 69, 70.

<sup>3</sup> Gore, *l.c.*



‘the Word was with God’;<sup>1</sup> He was the Instrument of creation, for ‘by Him all things were made’; and not only were all things made by Him, but even before His Incarnation He was in that world which He had made, the Source of life and light to all creation, so that when He came in the flesh the change lay not in the fact but in the conditions of His coming, namely, in the conditions of humanity;<sup>2</sup> the coming in the flesh was the coming of One Who all along had been present in the world which He had made. But not only, according to S. John, was He Who ‘was made flesh and dwelt among us’ the Word of God, He was also the Only-Begotten of the Father. By the title of Only-Begotten is signified the participation of the Word in the Essence of Him of Whom He is the Only-Begotten, a participation shared by no other, a participation which makes Him essentially Divine. By these two titles the truth as to our Lord’s Person is safeguarded in two directions, and two errors which actually arose in later times are anticipated; the title ‘the Word of God’

<sup>1</sup> πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. The preposition expresses, ‘beyond the fact of co-existence or immanence, the more significant fact of perpetuated intercommunion. The face of the Everlasting Word, if we may dare so to express ourselves, was ever directed towards the face of the Everlasting Father.’ Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the words of S. Paul, Col. i. 16, 17, and of S. Athanasius, *De Incarn.*, c. viii., οὗτι γε μακρὰν ὦν πρότερον.



guards the truth of our LORD's co-eternity with the Father, since we cannot conceive of the Father as 'subsisting without that eternal Thought or Reason which is the Son';<sup>1</sup> whilst on the other hand the title Only-Begotten Son guards against any idea of a merely impersonal or abstract existence to which the title 'Word of God' taken by itself might, and in fact did, give rise. S. John's teaching then, as we find it in the prologue to his Gospel, sets before us One Who was eternal, co-existent with the Father, yet personally distinct from Him, Who came forth 'in the beginning' as the Instrument whereby the worlds were made, Who during the ages of the Divine Long-suffering was 'in the world' giving to all things their coherence, until at last in the fulness of time He was manifested in the conditions of human flesh, 'was made man,' and tabernacled amongst us. And with this teaching of the opening verses agrees the whole view of our LORD's work and teaching and life which the Fourth Gospel presents to us, for the prologue is not to be regarded as an afterthought, tacked on to the Gospel which it introduces, but rather as an integral and organic part of that Gospel, setting forth, in few and simple yet most majestic words, truths as to our LORD's Person with which all that

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 237.

is recorded of Him in the Gospel is in complete harmony, and without which it would be inexplicable; our LORD's own sayings concerning Himself, not indeed only in S. John but also in the other Gospels, certainly imply those truths as to His Person which S. John's prologue proclaims. And there is the same complete harmony of view in the three Epistles of S. John and in the Apocalypse. He Who tabernacled amongst us was yet the Self-same Whose Glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father S. John saw and recorded; He Who came in the Flesh <sup>1</sup> is also the CHRIST,<sup>2</sup> the object of our Faith;<sup>3</sup> He Whose raiment is red with the blood of His Passion is yet He Whose 'Name is called the Word of God.'<sup>4</sup> The writings of him who was nearest on earth to the human heart of the LORD, and who on eagle's wings soared nearest to the very throne of God, the writings of John the Theologian, are indeed difficult of explanation if He of Whom he writes is not what we have been taught to confess Him in the words of the Catholic Creeds, Very and Eternal God made man for us.

(3) In passing from the writings of S. John to those of S. Paul we shall bear in mind that the controversies in which S. Paul was engaged were,

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. John iv. 2, 3.

<sup>3</sup> 1 S. John v. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 1 S. John v. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xix. 13.

unlike those which beset the closing years of S. John's life, much less directly concerned with the truth as to our LORD's Person : S. Paul's warnings are rather against Judaistic formalism and heathen and Gnostic licence than against the heresies which denied that 'JESUS is the CHRIST' or that 'JESUS CHRIST is come in the Flesh.' This fact, while it warns us not to expect the same kind of language from S. Paul as from S. John, adds strength to the testimony which S. Paul bears to our LORD's Divinity from the fact that it is more incidental and less called for by the circumstances in which he wrote. S. Paul's testimony, it must also be remembered, is incalculably strengthened by our knowledge of his own personal history, by our knowledge of a career suddenly arrested at the very height of its success, and turned right back into a course the very opposite to that which it was so triumphantly pursuing. S. Paul's is the witness of one whose opinions as to the claims of our LORD underwent so violent and complete a revulsion that we are driven to ask in amazement how so great a change was brought to pass. And the answer to our wondering question is in itself a testimony to the reality of our LORD's claims ; for the conversion of S. Paul was due, as we know, to his vision of One Whose right he recognised

from that day forward, against all his preconceived opinions, to be his Master and his LORD, Whose appearance to him on that eventful journey he afterwards came to reckon among the proofs which attested CHRIST'S Resurrection,<sup>1</sup> itself the great proof of His Divine Sonship.<sup>2</sup>

So then the testimony of S. Paul is the testimony of the most thorough conviction: as we consider it in the Acts and in the Epistles we find that it is no less convincing as to the faithfulness of the Creeds to the teaching of the Apostles than the testimony of the other writers of the New Testament. There is no one of the thirteen Epistles of S. Paul in which the characteristic salutation 'Grace be to you and peace'<sup>3</sup> does not couple together as the source of those blessings the Name of the LORD JESUS with the Name of GOD the Father: JESUS CHRIST is the channel through Whom all grace comes to mankind:<sup>4</sup> He is the theme of all S. Paul's preaching:<sup>5</sup> in His Name the Apostle passes sentence on the sinful member of the Corinthian Church:<sup>6</sup> 'by Him are all things and we by Him':<sup>7</sup> He indwells the hearts of His people:<sup>8</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The only variation from that formula is found in the Epistles to Timothy, where the word 'mercy' is added to 'grace and peace.'

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. i. 4, 30; Eph. i. 3.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Cor. i. 23.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. v. 4.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Eph. iii. 17.

His Name praise is at all times to be offered to God the Father:<sup>1</sup> God has given to Him a Name which is above every name:<sup>2</sup> in His Name S. Paul would have us do all whatsoever we do in word or deed:<sup>3</sup> He is the Deliverer from the wrath to come:<sup>4</sup> He will bring with Him in the glory of His second coming those that sleep in Him:<sup>5</sup> He will punish with eternal destruction from His Presence those who refuse to obey His Gospel:<sup>6</sup> before His Judgment-Seat we all must stand.<sup>7</sup> In these, and in many other passages like them,<sup>8</sup> S. Paul at least implies the GODHEAD of Him Who had appeared to him on the road to Damascus. But it is not only by implication that S. Paul bears witness to our LORD's Divinity: even if we leave on one side the great passage in the Epistle to the Romans, 'Who is over all God blessed for ever,'<sup>9</sup> which can only with the utmost violence to the grammar be made to refer not to our LORD but to the Eternal Father,

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Col. iii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess. i. 10.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 14.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Thess. i. 6-10.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. xiv. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. esp. the great passages which teach that man is justified by faith in CHRIST, in Rom. x. and Gal. iii. 6; and concerning the Holy Eucharist in 1 Cor. xi.; and concerning the Resurrection in 1 Cor. xv.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. ix. 5. Dean Vaughan (*in loc.*) characterises the interpretation which refers the words to the Eternal Father as 'harsh, evasive, and most needless.'

there are yet many other passages in S. Paul's writings which explicitly declare the Divinity of our LORD. Thus he declares Him to be 'the Image of the invisible God':<sup>1</sup> He was 'in the Form of God';<sup>2</sup> that glory which He laid aside when He was made Man was nothing short of the glory which pertained to One Who was on an 'equality with God':<sup>3</sup> 'in Him dwells all the fulness of the GOD-HEAD bodily':<sup>4</sup> He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to conceive of any point in which the testimony of the great Apostle of the Gentiles could have been clearer or more emphatic; it is difficult to conceive how he could have so spoken of any one of whom he did not believe that He was Divine.

(4) It is necessary to speak shortly only of other witnesses—of S. Matthew bearing his witness to the LORD Incarnate as the fulfiller of prophecy; of S. James, ascribing to JESUS CHRIST that august title 'the LORD of Glory,' which was also given to

<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 15-17.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 6, ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ. See Bp. Lightfoot's Commentary. Bp. Lightfoot says: 'Though μορφή is not the same as φύσις or οὐσία, yet the possession of the μορφή involves participation in the οὐσία also: for μορφή implies not the external accidents but the essential attributes.'

<sup>3</sup> Phil. ii. 6, 7. See again Bp. Lightfoot's Commentary.

<sup>4</sup> Col. ii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. i. 4.



Him by S. Paul;<sup>1</sup> of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews recognising in JESUS the eternal and unchangeable fulfilment of all that was typified by the Jewish priesthood and sacrifices and by the ritual of the Day of Atonement;<sup>2</sup> all with one voice bearing their testimony to the supernatural claims of Him to Whom they had given themselves to be followers and witnesses even unto death.

As with the witness of the LORD Himself, so also with the witness of His immediate followers, it is impossible to convey any impression of what it was, and is, by a mere quotation of passages: it is the whole tone and tenor of their writings, as of His own words, which must be taken into account. To one who reads those writings with a prejudice against the teaching of the Creeds as to our LORD's Divinity it must be at least a difficult matter to account for them on any lower supposition: to one who reads them with an unbiassed mind the conclusion is obvious that, whatever may be the attitude of others towards the claims of JESUS CHRIST, the attitude of His immediate followers is best expressed in those words of adoring faith in which one of them expressed the conviction to which he had come through the darkness of doubt and unbelief, 'My LORD and my God.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. James ii. 1; cf. 1 Cor. ii. 8.      <sup>2</sup> Heb. vii. 16; x. 12; vi. 20.

<sup>3</sup> S. John xx. 28.



## CHAPTER III

### THE INCARNATION AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### B. *The Manhood of our LORD.*

Lo ! He comes,  
Hungry, thirsty, homeless, cold,—  
Hungry, by Whom saints are fed  
With the eternal living bread ;  
Thirsty, from Whose piercèd side  
Living waters spring and glide ;  
Cold and bare He comes, Who never  
Can put off His robe of light—  
Homeless, Who must dwell for ever  
In the Father's bosom bright.

—*John Keble.*

HAVING set ourselves to consider the answer of the New Testament to the first question which our subject involves, 'Who He was Who became Incarnate,' a second question arises, 'What it was which He became.'

The answer given by the Church in her authoritative formularies is as follows : He, the Only-Begotten Son of God, of one Substance with the

Father, by Whom all things were made, was Himself 'made Man': 'Man of the substance of His Mother, born in the world . . . perfect Man of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting . . . inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood'; 'of one substance with us as touching the Manhood, like us in all things, sin except.'<sup>1</sup>

He was made Man. It is only with feelings of well-nigh overwhelming awe and reverence that one who has in any degree recognised the August Personality of the Word of God, the Only-Begotten of the Father, can approach the consideration of the words in which the Catholic Church has always and everywhere expressed the depths of His infinite condescension. 'He was made Man: like unto us in all things, sin only except.' And the knowledge that this ineffable self-abasement and humiliation was indeed 'for us men and for our salvation' must immeasurably increase the sense of awe-stricken reverence with which we contemplate it.

Early heretics sought to explain away the reality of the Incarnation by representing it as merely an incarnation in appearance, that being only a phantom body in which the LORD of glory was pleased to manifest Himself, but the Incarnation

<sup>1</sup> From the œcumenical 'Definition' of the Council of Chalcedon.

which the Church teaches is a real and true assumption of human nature, in all that appertains to its perfection, by the Eternal Word. It is the taking of real and true Manhood which we confess in the Creeds, and for the proof of which the Church sends us to the Holy Scriptures. Yet as we so approach the question, with the utmost reverence and humility, it will be well if we do so bearing in mind two considerations, the first, that in being made Man our LORD never for a moment ceased to be GOD, the second that the Manhood which he assumed was a perfect Manhood, not a Manhood distorted and disfigured by the sin which we have added to it.

(1) Our LORD in becoming man never ceased to be GOD. The significance of that truth will be considered further when we have to deal with the heresy of Nestorius and the work of the Council of Ephesus ; it will be sufficient now to emphasise the fact that the condescension of the Incarnation lay not in the putting aside of anything which pertains to the essence of the Divine Nature, but in the laying aside of that glory which was His before the world was, rendered necessary by His entrance into personal relations with our human race. 'He assumed the form of a servant,' says S. Leo, 'without the defilement of sin, enriching what was

human, not impairing what was Divine.’<sup>1</sup> This truth results from the yet more fundamental truth that the seat of our LORD’s Personality resides in His GODHEAD not in His Manhood, that is to say, He was GOD before He was Man, and in becoming Man the seat of His Personality continued unchanged; what He took upon Him when He was made Man was human nature, not human personality. This may be explained by our use of the personal pronoun: when we say ‘I’ or ‘he,’ we mean to express the Self which underlies all action and feeling and memory and will on the part of the person who uses the personal pronoun, or of whom it is used. Thus when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of our LORD that ‘He took upon Him the seed of Abraham,’<sup>2</sup> he obviously implies the personal existence of Him of Whom he speaks prior to that action which he predicates of Him · so too when our LORD says of Himself ‘Before Abraham was I am,’<sup>3</sup> He predicates of Himself a personal existence prior to that of Abraham. It

<sup>1</sup> S. Leo, *Ep.* xxviii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> S. John viii. 58. It should be noticed that in the words *Ἐγὼ εἶμι* our LORD was in fact using the very formula in which JEHOVAH had revealed Himself to His people of old as the Self-Existent One (Exod. iii. 14). This would seem to be the significance of the appointment by the English Church of both these passages in the Service for Passion Sunday (Exod. iii. is the first lesson at Mattins; S. John viii. 46-59 is the Gospel).

was then 'God's Presence and His very Self and Essence all-Divine'<sup>1</sup> which in the Incarnation entered into personal union with that Manhood which He took upon Himself; and while we confess the reality of the Manhood which He assumed, we do not by that confession mean to admit or to imply any derogation from the GOD-HEAD of Him who assumed it.

(2) And, further, when we speak of our LORD being made Man, of one substance with ourselves, and like unto us in all things, we understand always the saving clause with which the Chalcedonian Definition, following the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, qualifies His likeness to us, 'sin only except.'<sup>2</sup> And in using that saving clause we in no wise lessen or impair the truth and reality of that Manhood which He assumed, inasmuch as sin is not one of those things which pertain to the perfection of man's nature. Again we may quote S. Leo: 'Therefore in the entire and perfect nature of very man was born very God, whole in what was His, whole in what was ours. By "ours" we mean what the Creator formed in us at the beginning, and what He assumed in

<sup>1</sup> See Newman's 'Choir of Angelicals' in his *Dream of Gerontius*, some verses of which are familiar to us through their inclusion in our hymnals.

<sup>2</sup> *χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας*, Heb. iv. 15.

order to restore; for of that which the deceiver brought in, and man, thus deceived, admitted, there was not a trace in the Saviour; and the fact that He took on Himself a share in our infirmities did not make Him a partaker in our transgressions.<sup>1</sup> It was, we believe, a sinless Manhood which the LORD of glory assumed when He was made Man, but none the less a true and perfect Manhood; the absence of sin made it more, and not less, true and perfect than it would otherwise have been. The further man departs from sin the nearer does he come to the truth and perfection of his nature, because the nearer to conformity with that image and likeness which his nature had from the hands of God.

So then, bearing in mind these two considerations, (1) that in becoming Man our LORD never ceased to be God, and, (2), that the Manhood which He assumed was a sinless Manhood, we proceed to examine the statements of the Creeds in the light of Holy Scripture.

## I

In the Gospels there is presented to us the record of a perfect human life, a record which, while it is absolutely silent as to any participation in man's

<sup>1</sup> S. Leo, *Ep.* xxviii. 3. The translation is Dr. Bright's.

sin, is abundantly clear as to the share of Him Who is its subject in all the innocent affections and properties of human nature. There is less need to dwell on the witness of the Gospels to the Manhood of our LORD than on their witness to His GODHEAD, not because the one is less real or important than the other, but simply because from the very nature of the case it is the Manhood which during His earthly life is obvious and patent to all, it is the GODHEAD which is concealed under the veil of the Manhood and which was only gradually apprehended even by the Apostles themselves.<sup>1</sup> But notwithstanding, in view of the heresies which in after years attempted to deny or at least to minimise the perfection and completeness of our LORD's Human Nature, it will be well to state, as clearly as possible, the witness which the Holy Scriptures bear to the truth of the Church's emphatic assertions on that head. The careful reader of the Gospels will see that not only do they give no warrant for a denial of the true humanity of our LORD, but that, if words mean anything, there was no justification to be found in them either

<sup>1</sup> See Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 18. 'It is perhaps natural that a greater emphasis should be laid upon the higher truth which could be apprehended only by faith than on the lower one which, during the years of our LORD's earthly life, was patent to the senses of men.'



by those who taught that our Lord's human acts and sufferings though apparent were not real,<sup>1</sup> or by those who whilst they accepted the truth of the Incarnation so far as it involved the taking of a human body, yet impaired its completeness by denying the assumption of a human soul.<sup>2</sup>

As to the truth of our Lord's human body the Gospels record a real conception<sup>3</sup> and birth of a human mother;<sup>4</sup> a real growth<sup>5</sup> from infancy to boyhood<sup>6</sup> and from boyhood to man's estate;<sup>7</sup> a real experience of bodily sensations, hunger<sup>8</sup> and thirst,<sup>9</sup> weariness<sup>10</sup> and sleep;<sup>11</sup> and at last a real submission to the extremity of those bodily sufferings which accompany the parting asunder of soul and body by means of a violent and painful death. 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.' As by being born of a human mother He was pleased to enter into the conditions

<sup>1</sup> Such were the Docetists (so called from the Gk. *δοκέω*, I seem) who gave trouble to the Church as early as the time of S. John, and to whom he certainly alludes in his Epistles.

<sup>2</sup> Such were the heretics called by the name of Apollinaris, who denied to our Lord a rational human soul, asserting that the Logos took its place; the Monophysites or Eutychians, who taught that the human nature was swallowed up in the Divine; and the Monothelites, who asserted that our Lord had no human will.

<sup>3</sup> S. Lk. i. 31; ii. 21.

<sup>4</sup> S. Matt. i. 25; S. Lk. ii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> S. Lk. ii. 40, 52.

<sup>6</sup> S. Lk. ii. 42. <sup>7</sup> S. Lk. iii. 23.

<sup>8</sup> S. Matt. iv. 2; xxi. 18.

<sup>9</sup> S. John xix. 28.

<sup>10</sup> S. John iv. 6.

<sup>11</sup> S. Matt. viii. 24.

of creaturely existence in the way in which we enter into them, so too, in accordance with those conditions, He was pleased to pass out of life through that gateway of death by which we must pass when the days of our pilgrimage are fulfilled. As we read the Gospel-narrative of the Birth, and Life, and Death of JESUS CHRIST we cannot but be struck with the intense reality with which all that pertains to the truth and perfection of human nature is described, and that not the less because there is so much else which is utterly unaccountable if He is mere man and nothing else.

It is no less true that the Gospels witness to the real assumption by our LORD of a human soul,<sup>1</sup> of that of which we are accustomed to speak as the higher part of man. So we are told of His increase in wisdom as well as in stature;<sup>2</sup> of His compassion;<sup>3</sup> of His anger;<sup>4</sup> of His love for Mary and Martha and Lazarus,<sup>5</sup> for S. John,<sup>6</sup> for the rich young ruler;<sup>7</sup> of His mysterious saying with regard to the day of the Judgment;<sup>8</sup> of His temptation;<sup>9</sup> of His deliberate submission of His

<sup>1</sup> Soul is here used in the less strict sense as including both the soul and the spirit of S. Paul's 'trichotomy' in 1 Thess. v. 23.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lk. ii. 52.

<sup>3</sup> S. Matt. ix. 36; S. Lk. vii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> S. Mk. iii. 5.

<sup>5</sup> S. John xi. 5.

<sup>6</sup> S. John xiii. 23; xix. 26.

<sup>7</sup> S. Mk. x. 21.

<sup>8</sup> S. Mk. xiii. 32.

<sup>9</sup> S. Mk. i. 13.

human will, shrinking from the awfulness of the coming Passion, to the will of the Father;<sup>1</sup> of His anguish in the Garden<sup>2</sup> and on the Cross,<sup>3</sup> and at last of the conscious commending of His human soul as it was about to depart from the body into the Father's Hands.<sup>4</sup>

## II

We turn to the testimony of our LORD's immediate followers: and we find that those whose witness we have already seen to be so emphatic as to the perfect equality of the LORD JESUS with the Eternal Father 'as touching his GODHEAD,' are no less clear in their witness to His perfect Manhood.

(1) S. Paul tells us that 'God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law';<sup>5</sup> that the Son Himself 'made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men';<sup>6</sup> he tells us of the various acts and properties which characterise human existence, without giving any hint that he believed them to be a whit less real in our LORD's case than in ours—of His descent from a particular family,<sup>7</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> S. Mk. xiv. 36.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lk. xxii. 44.

<sup>3</sup> S. Mk. xv. 34.

<sup>4</sup> S. Lk. xxiii. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Phil. ii. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. i. 3.

His birth of a human mother,<sup>1</sup> of His circumcision,<sup>2</sup> of His obedience up to the very point of death,<sup>3</sup> of His crucifixion,<sup>4</sup> of His burial;<sup>5</sup> he insists on the reality of His mediation between God and man as dependent upon His being Himself Man;<sup>6</sup> he exhorts us to follow the perfection of His human example in its true humility and self-sacrifice.<sup>7</sup>

(2) In the Epistle to the Hebrews that entire sympathy of the high-priests of the old Dispensation which arose from the fact that they were 'taken from among men' and so 'compassed with infirmity,'<sup>8</sup> is declared to have found its complete fulfilment in Him Whom the Jewish Priesthood typified and foreshadowed. He was 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin';<sup>9</sup> He, in the days of His flesh, 'was heard in that He feared';<sup>10</sup> He, as the Captain of our salvation, was Himself made 'perfect through suffering';<sup>11</sup> of Him the inspired writer of the Epistle can even use the mysterious words, 'though He were a Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered';<sup>12</sup> the reality of His participation in our nature is

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. ii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Col. i. 20; 1 Thess. ii. 15.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 4.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Phil. ii. 5 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. v. 1, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Or 'for His godly fear' as Bp. Westcott translates ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας, Heb. v. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Heb. ii. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Heb. v. 8.

insisted upon when we are told that He partook of the same flesh and blood of which we partake,<sup>1</sup> for verily it was not of the nature of angels that He took hold but of the seed of Abraham;<sup>2</sup> this taking hold of our nature was not only that He might fulfil the high-priestly office in its ‘compassion for the ignorant and them that are out of the way,’ but also in order that He might, like those high-priests yet in a sense far transcending theirs, have ‘some-what to offer’;<sup>3</sup> He took our nature that ‘by the grace of God He might taste death for every man,’<sup>4</sup> that ‘through death He might destroy him that had the power of death,’<sup>5</sup> that by the shedding of His Blood He might become the Mediator of a new and everlasting Covenant.<sup>6</sup> With such passages as these before us, it will be seen that the later dogmatic language of the Church, boldly asserting our LORD’s consubstantiality with us in all things ‘sin only except,’ finds abundant justification not merely in the spirit but in the actual words of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

(3) Alike in his speeches and in his writings S. Peter emphasizes the fact of the sufferings and death of the Saviour, and thus testifies to the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. viii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. ii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. ii. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. ii. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. ix. 15; xiii. 20.

reality of His Human Nature, as also he lays emphasis on the superhuman worth of those sufferings and thus indicates the truth that His Personality was Divine.<sup>1</sup> Of His sufferings, of His Death, of the shedding of His Blood S. Peter speaks again and again, and in so speaking he is careful more than once to add the explanatory words 'in the flesh';<sup>2</sup> he uses almost the same words, 'according to the flesh,' in speaking of our LORD's descent from the royal house of David;<sup>3</sup> he quotes the prophecy of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy that the CHRIST Who should come would be a prophet 'like unto' Moses himself;<sup>4</sup> he alludes to the fact of the LORD JESUS having gone in and out among them;<sup>5</sup> he exhorts those to whom he is writing to follow the example of CHRIST;<sup>6</sup> he speaks of our LORD's burial and shews how David's prophecy was fulfilled by the fact that even in the tomb the 'flesh' of the Holy One saw no corruption;<sup>7</sup> he reminds his hearers of the way in which our LORD Himself had convinced His Apostles of the reality of His human body by eating and drinking with them after His Resurrection.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 23, 36; iii. 15, 18; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 39; 1 S. Pet. i. 2, 11, 19; ii. 21, 24; iii. 18; iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 S. Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18; iv. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iii. 22; Deut. xviii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> 1 S. Pet. ii. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Acts ii. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Acts i. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Acts x. 41.



(4) In studying the Gospel and Epistles of S. John we shall probably feel that the standpoint from which he writes is in the main directed towards that aspect of the truth as to our LORD'S Person which represents Him as the Eternal Word of God veiling His glory for a season under the conditions of creaturely existence.<sup>1</sup> Yet there is no writer in the whole of the New Testament who is more emphatic than S. John in his witness to the reality of our LORD'S Manhood, even though his insistence upon it may be less frequent than that of the other writers. Nothing, for instance, can exceed the clearness and freedom from ambiguity in which S. John in the prologue to his Gospel expresses the reality of our LORD'S condescension: 'And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us';<sup>2</sup> nothing again can be more emphatic than S. John's witness to the bodily sufferings of the Crucifixion; it is he, and he alone, who records the incident of the 'Ecce Homo';<sup>3</sup> it is he, and he alone, who records the one cry of bodily anguish in the Fifth Word, 'I thirst';<sup>4</sup> it is he, and he alone, who

<sup>1</sup> See Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 239. 'In S. John's Gospel, the Incarnation is exhibited not as the measure of the humiliation of the Eternal Word, but as the veil of His enduring and unassailable glory.' Abp. Alexander (*Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, vi. D.) points out that in his narrative of the Passion S. John brings out its 'Divine Glory.'

<sup>2</sup> S. John i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> S. John xix. 5.

<sup>4</sup> S. John xix. 28.

records the piercing of the sacred Side and the mysterious stream of blood and water which resulted from it.<sup>1</sup> So when we turn to the Epistles the vehemence with which S. John repudiates the heresy of those who denied that 'CHRIST was come in the flesh' is in itself sufficient proof of his own belief in the reality of that coming,<sup>2</sup> as are also the words in which at the beginning of the First Epistle he describes his own relationship to the 'Word of Life,'<sup>3</sup> and those with which in the Gospel he describes himself never by his own name but as 'the disciple whom JESUS loved,' and as 'he who lay on His Breast at supper.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. John xix. 34.

<sup>2</sup> 1 S. John iv. 2, 3; 2 S. John 7. The passage in the First Epistle (v. 6) about our LORD's coming 'by water and blood,' was probably directed against those who taught that the union between the Eternal Word and the Son of Mary was only of a temporary nature, so that He Who suffered upon the Cross was not really Divine, the impassible GODHEAD never having really united to itself passible humanity. These heretics taught that the CHRIST descended upon the Son of Mary at His Baptism and left Him before His Crucifixion, thus emptying the Passion and Death of the Saviour of all their redemptive efficacy. So S. John protests, it may be, against the idea of a coming limited to the period of the Ministry, the period, that is, between the 'water' of the Baptism and the 'blood' of the Passion; it was a real coming, a real incarnation, all the way through; the Word of GOD was incarnate not only in the water of Jordan, but in the blood of Calvary too.

<sup>3</sup> 1 S. John i. 1.

<sup>4</sup> S. John xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20, 24.

We have tried to examine in the light of Holy Scripture the Church's answer to the question which we proposed to ourselves at the beginning of this chapter, but once more we must insist on the fact that the Church's teaching as to the Manhood of our LORD, not less than as to His GODHEAD, is proved not so much by isolated passages, however apparently decisive, as by the whole tenor of the Scriptures. The CHRIST of the Apostles and Evangelists is as truly human as He is truly Divine; in becoming Man He ceased not to be God, nor yet are we ever allowed to imagine that having once become Man He has ever ceased to be so. He is 'God from Everlasting, Man for evermore'; it was no bodiless spirit whom the chosen witnesses beheld after the Resurrection, it was no bodiless spirit whom they beheld ascending into the heavens when the forty days were ended; the Great High Priest of Whom the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us did not conclude the functions proper to His office when He offered Himself upon the Altar of the Cross, but with that same nature in which He commenced the offering, so to speak, in the outer court, He passed into the holy Place, that is into heaven itself, there to make intercession for us;<sup>1</sup> and finally in the Apocalyptic Vision there

<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 3; iv. 14; vi. 20; ix. 12; ix. 24; x. 19, 20.

was revealed to S. John the Lamb 'as it had been slain,' the Living One Who had been dead, the Saviour Who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own Blood,<sup>1</sup> it was He the Self-Same, true Man in the reality of His Passion, true Man not less in the reality of His heavenly glory.

### III

We must close our consideration of the two great questions which we have so far proposed to ourselves—the consideration of the true GODHEAD and Perfect Manhood of our LORD—with the frank confession that there is a point beyond which we may not go. Absolute truth is revealed up to the point to which it is necessary for us to know it; beyond that point we are left, not, it may be, in total darkness, but with only sufficient light to enable us to arrive at possible or, at best, probable conclusions. This is especially the case with regard to the defining of great truths, and with regard to the reconciliation of two truths which appear to us to be opposed to each other. The question of Nicodemus, 'How can these things be,'<sup>2</sup> is very often left without answer; the desire to reconcile

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 6; i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> S. John iii. 9.

apparently conflicting statements is very often left ungratified. It is not meant that we are not to try to make such difficulties clear, provided of course we do so with the utmost humility and reverence; it is meant that we are not to seek to include among things certain what at best is only probable. It is remarkable how very cautious the Church<sup>1</sup> has been in the promulgation of dogmatic decisions, how very careful she has been not to enlarge the area of the articles of faith, how very slow she has been in her attempts to reconcile or define. Yet she has been quite unshrinking as to consequences, she has spoken with breath quite unbated, in the promulgation of those articles of faith which she believes 'may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.' In so doing the Church has only been following the example of our LORD and of His Apostles. Our LORD, for instance, when He took the Bread and said 'This is My Body' did not explain how it was what He declared it to be; S. Paul when

<sup>1</sup> Let it be said, once for all, that by the Church is not meant one or more great teachers in the Church, nor yet one part of the Church, but the whole Catholic Church of CHRIST in her oecumenical decisions. Infallibility is only claimed for the Church, though then most certainly it is claimed, when she has spoken as a whole as she did in the six or seven great councils which have been accepted by the whole Church.

he insisted strongly on the truth of God's predestinating Providence did not attempt to reconcile it with the truth, equally clearly revealed, of the reality of man's free-will. And strive as we may to explain and define the truths which we believe, strive as we may to reconcile what appear to us to be conflicting statements, we must be content to leave much unexplained, much unreconciled. We shall be wise if we settle it with ourselves that, while God has revealed to us all that is necessary to salvation, it is yet part of His Will for our probation and discipline to leave us without certain knowledge as to many things which we fain would know; so, whilst we cling on with faith that cannot be shaken to what the Church teaches as the absolute truth, and strengthen our faith by seeking for its proof in the Scriptures, we shall not be over anxious if we find much to puzzle us in what seems to follow from those truths which we receive as of Divine authority. And we shall try, with the help of the great teachers of the Church and of God's Holy Spirit illuminating our own understandings, to arrive at some conclusion as to our difficulties, not in order that we may proclaim the conclusions to which we ourselves have come as of certain and binding truth, but as submitting them to the final judgment of that great Day when we



shall see no longer 'through a glass darkly but face to face,'<sup>1</sup> when there shall be no more partial knowledge but the knowledge of Him who knows us as we are.

All this is to be borne in mind as we are confronted, as we must be at times, with the problems which arise from our belief in the union of two whole and perfect Natures in the One Person of the Word Incarnate. We must not expect that the acceptance of so great a mystery will be unaccompanied by difficulties arising from the very facts of the case, and we must not shrink from confessing our inability to solve those difficulties with absolute certainty. We may be unable to draw up clearly cut and sharply defined statements about the relation between the Divine Person of our LORD and His Human Nature which may account in detail for all the circumstances and conditions of His earthly life. What we have to remember is the truth expressed in the words of Bishop Andrewes as to the mode of our LORD's Presence in the Eucharist, 'Præsentiam credimus': 'de modo præsentiae nil temere definimus.'<sup>2</sup> The holding of a truth is one thing, its definition or explanation or reconciliation with other truths

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Andrewes, *Responsio*, p. 13.

is quite another; to the one we are bound not more by the œcumenical decisions of the Church than by the statements of the Holy Scriptures themselves; towards the other, at least in very many cases, our attitude has to be one of great humility, great patience, great readiness to search and ponder and wait. And above all it is well that we should remind ourselves and others that the difficulties which result from the very fact of the grandeur and unique importance of the great truths of the Faith are no bar to our acceptance of those truths. It is not necessary to reject the doctrine of the Holy Trinity because the explanation is difficult, or of Free-will because we do not see how exactly to reconcile it with the truth of God's predestinating Providence, or of our LORD's Presence in the Eucharist because we cannot define the exact mode of His Presence. So especially it is with the problems which arise out of the doctrine of our LORD's Personality: the difficulties of exactly explaining the mystery of His human knowledge,<sup>1</sup> the development of His human life, and the possibility of His enduring temptation,<sup>2</sup> whilst they call for our reverent and patient

<sup>1</sup> See Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, pp. 291-2, 295-8.

<sup>2</sup> See *Church Quarterly Review*, July 1883, pp. 290-2: Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, pp. 72, 77-82.

investigation, ought to be no bar to our acceptance of the Scriptural and Catholic truth of the union of the two whole and perfect Natures within the One Divine Personality. Explanation and reconciliation there is, for God's Truth cannot contradict itself; only 'until the day break and the shadows flee away' we must be content to wait for the full and clear knowledge which only can be ours when, in the light of the Vision of God, we know even as also we are known.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE INCARNATION AS SET FORTH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### c. *The Virgin-Birth.*

For Thou wert born of woman : Thou didst come,  
O Holiest, to this world of sin and gloom,  
Not in Thy dread omnipotent array :  
And not by thunders strewed  
Was Thy tempestuous road :  
Nor indignation burns before Thee on Thy way.  
But Thee, a soft and naked child,  
Thy Mother undefiled  
In the rude manger laid to rest  
From off her virgin breast.

—*Dean Milman.*

IN the two preceding chapters we have set ourselves to consider in the light of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament the answers which the Church gives to the questions, Who He was Who became incarnate, and, What it was which He became. There remains for our consideration the last of the main questions involved, the question of the way by which He was pleased to enter into those limitations of time and space to

which our manhood is necessarily subject. He was God from all eternity, He is Man for evermore; the question is how He, the Eternal and the Infinite, was pleased to manifest Himself in the conditions in which we read of Him in the New Testament. As before, we shall first state the answer to this third question in the authoritative language of the Church, and then proceed to examine it in the light of the New Testament Scriptures to which the Church ever implicitly sends us.

The Catholic Church declares that ‘He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary’; that He is ‘Man of the Substance of His Mother, born in the world’; that He is ‘consubstantial with the Father as to the GODHEAD, and, the Self-Same, consubstantial with us as to the Manhood, in all things like unto us sin except, begotten of the Father as touching the GODHEAD before the ages, but the Self-Same in the last days for us and for our salvation (born) as touching the Manhood of Mary the Virgin the Mother of God.’<sup>1</sup> To these authoritative words of the Universal Church, we may add the words of the Second Article of the Synod of London in 1562, binding on the clergy of the English Church, that ‘the Son which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of

<sup>1</sup> The Chalcedonian ‘Definition.’

the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance.'

## I

Such has been the unvarying teaching of the Church in all ages and in all places. Before going on to consider that teaching as witnessed by the New Testament, we shall do well to try and understand the moral position of the fact of the Virgin-Birth in connection with the great fundamental truth of the Incarnation itself. We have already endeavoured to show that the Incarnation was not an uncalled-for portent. The circumstances of the world at the time of our Saviour's birth were undeniably such as to constitute what the Roman poet describes as '*dignus Vindice nodus*.' Our purpose is now, granted that some such intervention was called for, to consider the further question of the reasonableness of the mode in which that intervention is asserted by the Church to have taken place. The Church asserts, and declares her assertion to be warranted by Holy Scripture, not only that the eternal Son of God condescended to take human flesh and to be born in that flesh of a human mother, but also that His birth was in a yet



further sense miraculous, in that the mother of whom He was born was a Virgin, so that, although He was like us in the mode of His entrance into the world, He was unlike us in deriving His human nature from one parent only. Now, putting aside for the moment all question of the miraculousness of our Lord's Birth of a Virgin, the question before us is that of its moral fitness. Granted that the needs of mankind cried aloud for one who, being both God and Man, could bridge over the impassable gulf which sin had interposed between man and His Maker, granted even that it was most fitting that God should descend to earth and take to Himself man's nature, was there any need for so great a miracle as is involved in the Church's teaching as to His Birth of a Virgin Mother? Might not the Eternal Son have been born by the ordinary process of generation and yet have been all that man's needs demanded, all that Holy Scripture represents Him as being? May we not, in other words, believe in the Incarnation without believing in the Virgin-Birth? The answer depends, to a great extent, on our conception of the needs which we believe that the Incarnation was designed to meet and satisfy; for if what was needed was the cutting off of the entail of sin which was the universal inheritance of the human race, it is difficult to understand how

that entail could have been cut off by a process of generation which differed in no respect from the process which in every other instance had resulted, and still does result, in the transmission of a sin-stained nature. If again mankind needed a new starting-point from which to take a beginning, a new head in which to find what it had lost in Adam, again it is difficult to see how there could have been in any sense a new starting-point or a new head in one whose descent from the first Adam was in no way different from that of any other of his descendants. And once more, perhaps the greatest difficulty of all, if it was needful that He Who condescended to take to Himself human nature should not at the same time take a human personality, it is well-nigh inconceivable that He could have avoided taking that personality if He had been born by that method of generation which always results in the birth of a person. He must either, in that case, have laid aside that Divine Personality or Self in virtue of which He was Very God, or He must have added to His Divine Personality a second, human, personality, existing thenceforward not merely in two Natures but also in two Personalities, with two centres, that is, of self-consciousness and self-determination, which is almost unthinkable.

The point then to which we have come is this that, putting aside for the moment the miraculousness of the Virgin-Birth and the question of the historical evidence for it, the belief that our LORD was born of a Virgin-Mother does at least suggest a mode of generation by which it might be possible for Him to be born like us in all things sin only except, by which He might become in a real sense the new starting-point and the new head of our race, and by which—without either laying aside His Divine Self or adding to it a second, human, self—He might wrap around His Divine Personality, unchanged and unchangeable, all that pertains to the perfection of our nature. It is not contended that these considerations are in themselves a proof of the Virgin-Birth: but it is contended that if we can overcome the obstacle of its miraculousness and if we can accept the evidence for its having taken place, there is a moral fitness about it such as no other mode of Incarnation which we can think of would suggest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'While we must confess that this Virgin-Birth is enveloped in a veil impenetrable to physical reasonings, yet we affirm it to be the only one which fully satisfies the demands of religion and theology. This article of our Creed, "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," is the only sure defence against both the Ebionitic and the Docetic view of the entrance of the GOD-Man into connection with humanity.'—Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, § 39 (Clark's trans.).

## II

This is not altogether the place in which to discuss the objections to the Virgin-Birth on the ground of its miraculous nature, simply because we are proceeding on the assumption that those for whom the present treatise is intended have already satisfied themselves as to the credibility of miracles in the abstract. And indeed any mode of incarnation postulates the miraculous intervention of God in the affairs of men, and that which is implied in the words ‘Conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary,’ differs after all only in degree not in kind from any other mode. As to how far departure from the ordinary mode of generation may be regarded as credible, in view of such departures as have been noticed in the animal kingdom, is a question which must be left to those within whose province such researches come; they can hardly be said to come within the province of the theologian. The theologian’s part is respectfully and gratefully to accept what men of learning in branches of science other than his own have discovered, only reserving to himself the right not to receive as final any decision of science, in the narrower sense of the term, which conflicts with the authoritative teaching of the Church. If we apply

this to the question before us it is probably true to say that the authoritative teaching of the Church as to the Virgin-Birth of our LORD has in no sense been pronounced incredible by anything that can be called a consensus of scientific opinion;<sup>1</sup> had such a pronouncement been made, or were it yet to be made, the attitude of the Churchman would have to be that of patient waiting until fuller knowledge should make all things clear, the fact being that we have no means of knowing, beyond a certain

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the teachings of science (in the narrower sense) we may well ask to be satisfied that there is the same 'œcumenicity' which we demand before accepting as authoritative the teaching of theologians. The opinions of teachers in whatever branch of learning are to be accepted certainly with that respect which is due to the eminence of the teacher but yet not as of final authority until they can be shewn to have received universal approval and acceptance amongst those who have the right to express approval in that particular branch of learning. For example, the law of gravitation is practically of œcumenical authority in one sphere, just as belief in the Holy Trinity is of œcumenical authority in another sphere; but is it not true that there are opinions among scientific men which cannot be said to have greater authority than, for example, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception among the doctrines of the Universal Church, that doctrine never having been received or promulgated by the Eastern or English parts of the Church? There may, it is true, be apparent conflict between science and the Faith over matters upon which neither, or only one, has pronounced an œcumenical decree, as for example when a part of the Church imprisoned Galileo or condemned Kepler; but the conflict could only be real and permanent in cases, if such could be conceived, where each had pronounced œcumenically a decree opposed to the other.

point, how God suspends His own laws in order to intervene, miraculously as it seems to us, in the normal working of that which we call Nature. One day we shall know, and then we shall see that what He Himself has revealed to us is in no way incredible even in the light of what He has also revealed to those who have studied the wonders of other branches of science.

So much has been said to help, if it may be, those whose difficulties in accepting the teaching of the Creed as to the mode of the Incarnation have arisen rather from the scientific than from the evidential or moral point of view; and it may help such to know that Professor Huxley, who on other grounds rejected the teaching of the Creed as to the Virgin-Birth, has left it on record that on scientific grounds he has no objection to offer to it. 'The mysteries of the Church are child's play compared with the mysteries of nature . . . virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death are ordinary phenomena to the naturalist.'<sup>1</sup>

But, after all, we are not anxious to defend the doctrine on its miraculous side. If we accept miracles at all, it is not for us to say to what extent God's working may be miraculous and

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Dean Plumtre quoted in Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, note 15, p. 246.



beyond what point He may not go. If He created the First Adam, without the intervention of any human parentage, are we to say that He might not 'prepare a body' for the Second Adam if not by creation out of the dust of the earth yet by a mode of generation unknown before or since, at least among human beings? If it could be shewn that on scientific grounds the Virgin-Birth is entirely and absolutely credible it might still be questioned whether we have really gained anything by the proof. We believe that God does not work meaningless portents; we believe also that miracle does not mean the arbitrary violation of law and order, but that it is the purposeful act of the All-Wise and All-Mighty superseding for the moment the ordinary methods of His own working in order to accomplish His own gracious and original purpose when in danger of being frustrated by man's sin. Certainly the Virgin-Birth was miraculous, as we understand the expression, but it does not seem in any way to militate against that conception of God's working which rather leads us to expect that, if God is what we believe Him to be, He will from time to time intervene, in ways which we call miraculous, in the course of that world which He has Himself created. Man had been created in the image of God to share in God's eternal blessedness; that image in man had become blurred and dimmed



by the mysterious presence and power of sin, and man was in danger of losing that glorious destiny for which he was created. What was needed was restoration: man must be brought back: there must be found for him a new Head, a new Fount of Life: but to the question, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' there was no answer but that of the patriarch, 'Not one.'<sup>1</sup> And so GOD in the fulfilment of that gracious purpose which had been thwarted for the time by man's sin Himself wrought deliverance, and by a new and marvellous Birth brought out of an unclean race One in Whom man might find a new Head, a new Fount of Life, One in Whom the entail of sin might be cut off, One to Whose perfect Manhood from the very moment of His conception the Blessed Son of GOD might be united in personal union, without for a moment changing in any way that Divine Personality which was His from all eternity.

### III

The question which remains is the historical or evidential one. Admitting that on the side of its moral fitness there is at least nothing unreasonable in the article of the Creed which declares that our

<sup>1</sup> Job xiv. 4.

LORD was born of the Virgin Mary, and that, viewed as miraculous, the same tremendous fact is not inconsistent with what we believe as to God's working in the kingdoms of nature and grace, we have to inquire as to the evidence for it in the New Testament, and, as far as may be, to consider the nature of that evidence.

Assuming for the moment the historical accuracy and the genuineness of the New Testament Canon, we shall first state the position which the Virgin-Birth occupies in the various books. The detailed account of the Birth of our LORD is given only by the Evangelists S. Matthew and S. Luke, they having derived their knowledge of it, as we must suppose, in the last resort from S. Joseph and from the Virgin Mother herself. S. Matthew's account is obviously that derived from the point of view of S. Joseph, embodying as it does three special revelations<sup>1</sup> made to him, and to him alone, and which he only could have been in a position to communicate to others, whilst the narrative of S. Luke must have come ultimately from the Blessed Virgin herself, she alone being the recipient of the mysterious message brought to her by the Archangel, and she alone being in a position to communicate it to others. We shall remember that

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. i. 20; ii. 13, 19.

S. Luke, in his preface, expressly claims to have received the information on which he bases his narrative from those 'who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word'; if then the record of the Annunciation and of the Nativity is an integral part of S. Luke's Gospel we must suppose that S. Luke derived it, if not from the holy Mother herself, at least from one or other of those to whom in later years she had made it known.

The narratives which are contained in the first chapter of S. Matthew and in the first two chapters of S. Luke expressly state that our LORD was born of a Virgin and that the power which enabled her to conceive was no other than that of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. Alike in the message to the Virgin herself, and in the revelation which comforted and satisfied her betrothed husband, this is expressly stated; and it is because of this that both are bidden not to fear,<sup>1</sup> seeing that what must else have caused the bitterest anguish and dismay was the direct work of Him with Whom nothing is impossible, by the Overshadowing of Him Who when God first made the world 'brooded'<sup>2</sup> over the lifeless chaos.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. i. 20; S. Lk. i. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. i. 2, καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος: S. Lk. i. 35, δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι.

<sup>3</sup> Something should be said here, and it cannot be said better than

When we turn to the two other Gospels we find that neither of them contains any record of the fact of the Virgin-Birth, nor do we find any mention of it in the Epistles, or in the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand it must be noticed in passing that nowhere is anything said, either actually or by implication, by Apostle or Evangelist, which would lead us to suppose that their silence is inconsistent with a belief in or a knowledge of the facts recorded by S. Matthew and S. Luke.

Two questions now present themselves.

(1) Are the first chapters of S. Matthew and S. Luke worthy of credit?

in the words of Bishop Pearson, about what theologians have understood as to the work of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. If the holy Virgin 'were truly the Mother of CHRIST then is there no reason to deny to her in respect of Him whatsoever is given to other mothers in relation to the fruit of their womb, and consequently no more is left to be attributed to the Spirit than what is necessary to cause the Virgin to perform the actions of a mother. . . . As He was made of the substance of the Virgin, so was He not made of the substance of the Holy Ghost Whose essence cannot at all be made. And because the Holy Ghost did not beget Him by any communication of His essence, therefore He is not the father of Him, though He were conceived by Him.' The action of the Holy Ghost 'is not so to be understood as if He did perform any act of generation, such as is the foundation of paternity.'—*On the Creed*, Art. III. ch. ii. §§ 5, 6.

<sup>1</sup> Unless S. Paul's words in Gal. iv. 4, 'made of a woman' (γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός), and the Vision of the 'Woman clothed with the Sun' in Rev. xii., are allusions to it. Obviously no argument can be based on either. On the latter passage see Professor Milligan in the *Expositor's Bible*, *in loc.*

(2) If they are, can we explain the silence of the other New Testament writers?

(1) Are S. Matthew and S. Luke trustworthy in their narrative of the miraculous Birth?

It has been urged that neither Evangelist, after his opening chapters, ever mentions or alludes to the Virgin-Birth again, and that therefore their Gospels would be quite complete without those chapters, which in fact, so it is said, only embody the later legends which grew up around the Birth and Infancy, just as similar legends have grown up around the births of other great men and heroes. The miraculous Birth, as it came to be believed by Christians, was either, it is said, a myth or a legend, and then, in order to gain support and authority for it as an actual fact, it was fraudulently embodied in the narratives of the first and third Evangelists at some period during the second century after CHRIST. It may be said, without exaggeration, that so to deal with the Gospels is to deal with them in a way in which no other document could be dealt with without suggesting gross unfairness and prejudice on the part of those who make such an attack; it is to run counter to all the evidence, both external and internal, which we possess as to the genuineness of the two Gospels as a whole. With regard to external

evidence it can at least be said that no early writer to whom the Gospels were known gives us any reason for imagining that the Gospels as he knew them were different from those which we now accept, except indeed the heretic Marcion 'who notoriously mutilated the Gospel to make it favour his views of the Person of CHRIST';<sup>1</sup> whilst, with regard to internal evidence, it is difficult to imagine that any forger could have so perfectly embodied his matter into the text of the Gospel as to leave no sign of the fraud, or that he should have been content with an account so reserved and with such marked absence of miraculous detail.<sup>2</sup> The only alternative to conscious and deliberate fraud on the part of a forger after the death of the Evangelists, is the supposition of carelessness or ignorance on the part of the Evangelists themselves in their use of the documents or of the information on which they based their narratives of the Incarnation. We may consider this supposition in especial reference to the Gospel of S. Luke. Supposing that S. Luke, through ignorance or through over-credulity, commenced his Gospel with a narrative of certain events connected with the Birth of our LORD which was

<sup>1</sup> Alford, *Greek Testament*, vol. i. *Prolegomena*, ch. iv. § vii.

<sup>2</sup> See Bishop Satterlee, *New Testament Churchmanship* (New York, 1899), pp. 7, 8. The inspired record of the Birth at Bethlehem 'is as remarkable for what it does not record as for that which it narrates.'



based on untrustworthy testimony, is it conceivable that such an account could have passed without challenge by those who knew otherwise, of whom there must have been many still living at the time when S. Luke published his Gospel?<sup>1</sup> Dean Alford points out that the only person who could conceivably have known the circumstances of the Birth was the Mother of the LORD herself, and that she 'would most certainly have been appealed to for an account of' those circumstances. If then S. Luke's account was derived from an untrustworthy source, it is hardly conceivable that it could have been accepted whilst those were actually living in the Church who knew it to be other than that which the Mother herself had delivered to them. 'If not the Mother of our LORD herself, yet His brethren were certainly living; and the universal reception of the Gospel in the very earliest ages sufficiently demonstrates that no objection to this part of the sacred narrative had been heard of as raised by them.'<sup>2</sup> But, we may ask further, is

<sup>1</sup> The latest date that can with any probability be assigned to the third Gospel is 80 A.D. (Professor Sanday in *Book by Book*, p. 404). Other authorities put it much earlier: Dean Alford, *e.g.*, thinks that 58 A.D. is the latest date which can be assigned to it.—*Greek Testament, Prolegomena*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> See Alford, *Greek Testament, Prolegomena*, p. 48. It should be remembered that it is to S. Luke himself that we owe our knowledge that the Mother of the LORD was with the Church after the Ascension, Acts i. 14.



there any real reason to question S. Luke's trustworthiness as a historian? Is there any real reason to think that he was not justified in claiming to have 'traced the course of all things accurately from the first'?<sup>1</sup> To that question an answer can only be given by those who have carefully studied S. Luke's Gospel and the Book of the Acts: to such it must appear in the highest degree improbable that one who was clearly so careful and so accurate in the rest of his history should have been so careless and so ready to accept insufficient testimony in the important narrative contained in his first two chapters. 'Historical accuracy is not a capricious and intermittent impulse. It is a fixed habit of mind, the result of a particular discipline. Historians of the school of the author of the Acts of the Apostles are not men to build a flamboyant portal of romance over the entrance to the austere temple of Truth.'<sup>2</sup> The crucial passage at the be-

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke i. 3, ἀκριβῶς—παρηκολουθηκότι—ἄνωθεν. 'Exactness and definiteness of detail in his narrative—these are implied in the word ἀκριβῶς: investigation and personal study—implied in the word παρηκολουθηκότι: tracing of events from their causes and origin—implied in ἄνωθεν: such are the qualities which Luke declares to be his justification for writing a narrative when many other narratives already were in existence; and he says emphatically that this applies to all that he narrates.'—Ramsay, *Was Christ born at Bethlehem? A study on the credibility of S. Luke*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Alexander, *Leading Ideas of the Gospels*, p. 154 (New Ed., London, 1892).

ginning of S. Luke's second chapter about the enrolment under Quirinius (A.V. Cyrenius), so far from militating against the belief in his accuracy as a historian or his knowledge of grammar, has now been shewn by Professor Ramsay to prove conclusively that he was 'a great historian who wrote good Greek of the first century kind.'<sup>1</sup>

If we turn to S. Matthew's account of the Virgin-Birth we may again use the argument of the extreme improbability of any such account of the circumstances of our LORD's Birth being allowed to pass current at a time when those who knew otherwise must have been still living; whilst the weakness of the objection that, instead of its being based on information received from S. Joseph and others, it was really invented in order to make it square with the expectations of such a birth of the Messiah current at the time, may be understood when it is found that no proof of such expectations can be produced.<sup>2</sup> There is indeed no evidence to shew that the Jews of S. Matthew's time interpreted Isaiah's prophecy in the same way that he did,

<sup>1</sup> *Was Christ born at Bethlehem? A study on the credibility of S. Luke*, p. 247. It is difficult to use any other epithet to characterise Dr. Ramsay's vindication of S. Luke's historical accuracy than the adjective triumphant.

<sup>2</sup> See Gore, *Dissertations*, appended Note A, p. 289, and Bishop Satterlee, *New Testament Churchmanship*, pp. 22 f.

which, of course, strengthens the application to S. Matthew of the statement which has been made as to the early Christians generally, 'that the truth is rather that the actual events taught the first Christians to read prophecy afresh, than that prophecy induced them to imagine events—at any rate important events—which did not occur.'<sup>1</sup> It is next to impossible to imagine that S. Matthew could have invented such a unique event as that of the Virgin-Birth merely from his interpretation of a single verse in Isaiah which was certainly not supported by anything like a consensus of contemporary Jewish belief or Messianic expectation, if indeed it was so interpreted by them at all: on the other hand, there is nothing more reasonable than to suppose that, when S. Matthew had come to know that He Whom he had accepted as the Messiah had been born of a Virgin in David's City, he should have recognised with joy in that wondrous Birth the fulfilment of those ancient prophecies of Isaiah and of Micah which before he had scarcely understood. Then he would see, under the guidance of Him Who spake by the prophets, that, however true it may have been that Isaiah's prophecy was partially fulfilled by the birth of a son to Ahaz or to the prophet himself, it was only completely

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 36.

fulfilled by the Birth of Him Who was the end of all prophecy, and that, whatever other interpretations may have been given to the prophet's expression for her who was to bear the promised Son, its only full and perfect interpretation was to be found when, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Virgin was enabled to be a mother, the human mother of Him Who, because she was a virgin, could truly be Immanuel, God-with-us.

Before passing away from this question it should be noticed that the mere fact of there being discrepancies between the accounts of the Nativity in the first and third Gospels only strengthens their witness to the great central fact on which they are entirely at one, the fact that CHRIST was born of a Virgin Mother at Bethlehem in the days of Herod the King. The discrepancies are such as prove that the two accounts are derived from two entirely independent sources; they are not such as to be incapable of reconciliation.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The question then remains, If we accept as

<sup>1</sup> It is not possible here to discuss the differences between the narratives of S. Matthew and S. Luke. The main differences are to be found in the fact that each Evangelist gives a different genealogy of our LORD, and in the way in which S. Matthew speaks of Nazareth in ch. ii. 23 and in which S. Luke omits all mention of the flight into Egypt in ch. ii. 39. With regard to the latter difficulty, we need only suppose that in the document, or documents, which S. Matthew used there was no mention of the previous

worthy of credit the narratives of S. Matthew and S. Luke, can we account for or explain the silence of the other New Testament writers, especially that of the other two Evangelists, S. Mark and S. John?

Now the first question which must be answered with regard to the silence of these writers is the question as to the scope and purpose of their writings. What was their aim in writing, what were the facts which came within the scope of that aim? S. Mark's Gospel is clearly intended to be a Gospel of our LORD's Ministry; he does not profess to narrate any event in our LORD's life prior to His Baptism which inaugurated His public Ministry, and so he introduces our LORD as coming from Nazareth to S. John the Baptist in order to be baptized by him. To say therefore that S. Mark omits all mention of the miraculous Birth is surely not more than to say that his Gospel does not commence the narrative until the time of our LORD's public Ministry, which began, as we know from

residence of S. Mary at Nazareth, and that in the document, or documents, which S. Luke used the flight into Egypt was not mentioned. See on this Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 36. With regard to the different genealogies, which is a very difficult question, see art. *Genealogy* in Dict. Bible by Bp. Arthur Herve; Bp. Chr. Wordsworth on S. Matt. i; Alford on S. Lk. iii. 23; Gore, *Dissertations*, pp. 37 ff. See also Note A at the end of this volume.

S. Luke, when He was thirty years of age: certainly his silence cannot prove that he knew nothing about it.

With regard to S. Paul it may be said that 'it is a well-known fact that his epistles are almost exclusively occupied in contending for Christian principles, not in recalling facts of our LORD's life.'<sup>1</sup> The same may also be said of the Epistles of S. Peter, S. James, S. John and S. Jude. S. Paul does certainly allude to events in our LORD's life, as also does S. Peter, but neither Apostle ever professes to give an exhaustive narrative, and that being the case no proof of their ignorance of the fact of the Virgin-Birth or of their disbelief in it can be drawn from their silence about it; in fact it does not come within the scope of their purpose. On the other hand, with regard to S. Paul, it can be urged with great force that his doctrine of the Second Adam implies, if it does not require, a miraculous birth. For if 'in Adam all die,' how should He be exempt from that universal sentence—and not only exempt but Himself take the place of the First Head, as one in whom the race can once more find its centre and its unity—if His birth was in no way different from that by which every man is made a partaker of the sin-stained,

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 10.



death-sentenced nature of him through whom sin entered into the world and death by sin? The unique position of the Second Adam standing over against the First Adam, according to the teaching of S. Paul, as the new Head provided by the Creator for Adam's race, may be said at least to imply if not to require a wholly exceptional mode of generation brought about, not less than the First Adam's creation was brought about, by the operation of the Almighty Creator.

When we turn to the Gospel of S. John, the two facts that 'all critics agree in ascribing to it a date considerably later than that of any of the other three,'<sup>1</sup> and that it is obviously supplemental to those other three, at once suggest a reason for the Apostle's silence as to the fact of the Virgin-Birth. Not only does he omit all mention of the fact of our LORD's Birth of a Virgin at Bethlehem, not only does he omit all mention of the institution of the two great Sacraments, but it is even 'quite exceptional if we find in the Fourth Gospel anything that had been recorded in the others.'<sup>2</sup> The reason is obvious to any one who is not interested in the discovery of some sinister reason for S. John's omissions. The fact is that the Christians for whom S. John wrote his Gospel, at the time at

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Salmon in *Book by Book*, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*



which he wrote it, were very much in the position, with regard to the facts of their Master's life, of Christians now. The Christians of the last decade of the first century had had at least fifty years of oral teaching from those who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word; they had in their hands certainly the Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Mark;<sup>1</sup> and not only must S. Paul's teaching about Baptism and the Eucharist have been widely diffused but those rites must have been constantly celebrated and in constant use among them. Then it was that S. John sent forth his Gospel, not surely in order to cast doubt upon the facts which Christians had been taught about our LORD's life, and upon the rites which they practised in obedience, as they believed, to His commands—had he intended to do that he would have done something more than merely omit to mention them—but in order to furnish a record of facts not recorded by the other three Evangelists, and to provide teaching on the subject of the facts which they did record which might help to the understanding and appreciation of those

<sup>1</sup> Probably also that of S. Luke: but owing to that Gospel having been written for a private person, as seems most probable, its general diffusion may have been later than that of the other two. Even however if we take the latest date that can be assigned to S. Luke's Gospel (A.D. 80), its publication, even if not its diffusion, must have preceded that of S. John's by many years.

facts. This is exactly what is done in the third and sixth chapters of the Fourth Gospel with regard to the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist,<sup>1</sup> and it is what is done, not less, in the Prologue with regard to the fact of the Virgin-Birth. If it be true that 'every fact has its factual and its ideal aspect'<sup>2</sup> then we may well express the relation of the fourth to the first three Gospels in the matter of the Incarnation as the relation of the ideal to the factual. 'The fact of the Incarnation is recorded by S. Matthew and S. Luke; it is assumed by S. Mark; the Idea which vitalises the fact is dominant in S. John.'<sup>3</sup> 'In S. John the fact of the Incarnation is lifted up and flooded with the light of a Divine idea. If, in the Unity of the Divine existence, there be a Trinity of Persons; if the Second Person of that Trinity is to assume the reality of flesh, and the likeness of sinful flesh; we can, in some measure, see why He needed the tabernacle of a

<sup>1</sup> See Bp. Westcott on S. John, Additional Note on chap. vi. p. 113. 'S. John living in the centre of Christian Society does not notice the institution of services which were parts of the settled experience of Church life. He presupposes them; and at the same time records the discourses in which the ideas clothed for us and brought near to us in the two Sacraments were set forth. He guards the Sacraments in this way from being regarded either as ends in themselves or as mere symbols. . . .'

<sup>2</sup> Whewell, *Inductive Philosophy*, quoted by Abp. Alexander, *Leading Ideas*, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Abp. Alexander, *Leading Ideas*, Introd., p. xxiv.

body, framed and moulded by the Eternal Spirit to be His fitting habitation. The mystery of a Virgin Mother is the correlative of the mystery of the Word made flesh.'<sup>1</sup>

One more question with regard to the argument *e silentio* must be briefly touched upon: it is that of the silence, in the larger part of their narrative, of those Evangelists themselves who do record the fact of the Virgin-Birth in their earlier chapters. And here again the question must be met with the counter-question, Does it come within the scope of their purpose to mention it? And the answer to that question is, No. Their aim is to set forth the narrative of our LORD's earthly Life and Ministry and of His Death and Resurrection, and in the pursuance of that aim there would be no reason why they should again allude in express terms to the fact of His miraculous Birth; there would even be many reasons why they should not allude to it, why they should even record those sayings which might seem to imply that our LORD was born not at Bethlehem in Judæa but at Nazareth in Galilee, not of a Virgin Mother but of the marriage of His Mother with him who was bidden by the angel not to be afraid to take unto him Mary his betrothed

<sup>1</sup> Abp. Alexander, *Leading Ideas*, p. 186. See also Bp. Westcott on S. John. i. 14.

wife. For it was certainly believed by the Jews that He had 'come out of Galilee,' and that His Father was Joseph the Carpenter of Nazareth, and, if only for His Mother's sake there would be every reason for not contradicting that general belief. It is probable from the Blessed Virgin's own words that our LORD was accustomed to call Joseph 'father,'<sup>1</sup> and that even His disciples did not at first know that Joseph was not so related to Him;<sup>2</sup> and that being so it is surely an indication of the truthfulness of the Evangelists that they record the general belief and the actual sayings, and do not suppress them out of a fear lest they should seem to contradict what they themselves had recorded as to the Virgin-Birth at Bethlehem. Such sayings as 'Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing'<sup>1</sup> and 'Is not this the Carpenter's Son'<sup>3</sup> do not prove that S. Matthew and S. Luke knew nothing of the miraculous birth and that therefore their first chapters are not an integral part of their Gospels: they only prove that they are truthful recorders of what was actually said and thought about our LORD in the days of His earthly Ministry, and of the way in which the Mother was wont to speak of him who had performed all the duties of a father towards her Divine Son.

<sup>1</sup> S. John i. 45.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. xiii. 55.

## IV

If then there is a moral fitness in the miraculous birth of a Virgin such as no other mode of incarnation which we could conceive of would seem to suggest; if there is in that Birth nothing which, granted God's power of working miracles, is inconsistent with what we know of His mode of working them, or which transcends the known limits of His mode of working; if there is no reasonable ground for distrusting the historical accuracy or the credibility of the New Testament writers; then we may reasonably feel that there is very strong ground for the acceptance of the universal teaching of the Church that the Eternal Son of God came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man—teaching so universal that, except on the supposition that it represents the very truth, it is difficult to account for this universality.

## CHAPTER V

### THE IMPLICIT FAITH OF THE CHURCH IN THE ANTE-NICENE PERIOD

It is not in man's ability either to express perfectly or to conceive the manner how this (*i.e.* the Incarnation) was brought to pass. But the strength of our faith is tried by those things wherein our wits and capacities are not strong. Howbeit because this Divine Mystery is more true than plain, divers having framed the same to their own conceits and fancies are found in their expositions thereof more plain than true.

—*Hooker.*

BEFORE we can enter upon the history of the formulation and promulgation of the Faith of the Church as witnessed to by the canonical Scriptures, we must seek to arrive at some knowledge and understanding of the period which elapsed between the Age of the Apostles and the Age which is conveniently characterised as that of the Councils. We shall best understand this period if we start with a clear idea of the position of the Church as

that position is represented in the first Church History, the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, and in the earliest Christian literature, the Apostolic Epistles in the New Testament. In those writings the Church is represented as a Divine Society with properly constituted officers, with duly appointed rites, and with an authoritative body of doctrine. It is with the last that we are especially concerned now. In obedience to our LORD's last recorded command the Apostles went forth to teach, or to make disciples of<sup>1</sup> all nations; so we find constant references to a certain body of teaching. For example we have only to notice some of the passages in which the word 'faith' is used in an objective sense, '*the Faith*,' meaning something nearly equivalent to the body of Christian teaching both moral and doctrinal. Thus we are told that after the ordination of the Seven there was a great increase in the number of the disciples and that many of the priests were 'obedient to the Faith,'<sup>2</sup> and again S. Luke tells us that the reception of the letter from the Council of Jerusalem by the churches of Syria and Cilicia resulted in the confirmation of those churches 'in the Faith.'<sup>3</sup> When we turn to the writings of S. Paul we often find the word used objectively: thus he speaks of himself as 'preaching

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 19, μαθητεύσατε.    <sup>2</sup> Acts vi. 7.    <sup>3</sup> Acts xvi. 5.



the Faith which once he destroyed'; he contrasts the Faith, the Christian teaching, with the Law, the Jewish teaching; he describes Christians as members of the household of the Faith;<sup>1</sup> in writing to the Philippians he urges them 'to strive with one soul for the Faith of the Gospel';<sup>2</sup> whilst in the Pastoral Epistles he uses such expressions as 'erring from the Faith'<sup>3</sup> and 'making shipwreck concerning the Faith'<sup>4</sup> in the sense of rejecting the Apostolic teaching. In addition to these instances of the use of ἡ πίστις in an objective sense, there are two remarkable expressions used by S. Paul which seem not only to suggest the body of Apostolic teaching in the abstract but to imply the definite contents of that body of teaching: in the Epistle to the Romans S. Paul expresses his thankfulness to God for the obedience of the Roman Christians to 'that form of teaching whereunto they were delivered,'<sup>5</sup> and in the Second Epistle to Timothy he bids him 'hold fast the pattern of sound words'<sup>6</sup> which he had received orally from S. Paul.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 23; iii. 23; vi. 10. In these passages from the Epistle to the Galatians, Bishop Lightfoot says that the meaning of ἡ πίστις 'seems to hover between the Gospel and the Church,' the Church being regarded as 'the embodiment of faith.' See his *Epistle to the Galatians*, *in loc.*, and detached note, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 27.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 10, 21, and cf. 2 Tim. ii. 18.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. i. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. vi. 17, *τύπον διδαχῆς*.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Tim. i. 13, *ὑποτύπωσιν ὑγιαίνοντων λόγων*.

These passages are sufficient to prove, if such proof were needed, that in the exercise of their office as teachers, the official representatives of the teaching Church, the Apostles must have had a certain more or less fixed form or outline of teaching which they delivered<sup>1</sup> to those whom they instructed in the Faith. What exactly that form was we cannot of course say, though we can arrive at some idea of its subject-matter. At least it must have contained definite teaching about our LORD: to preach 'JESUS and the Resurrection,'<sup>2</sup> to be 'witnesses of His Resurrection,'<sup>3</sup> to preach 'in JESUS the Resurrection from the dead,'<sup>4</sup> to 'preach CHRIST Crucified,'<sup>5</sup> 'to teach and to preach JESUS as the CHRIST'<sup>6</sup>—all these expressions, and many others like them, imply dogmatic teaching about the Person of CHRIST, whilst S. Paul's vehement denunciations of those who preached, or who should preach, 'another JESUS' or 'a different Gospel'<sup>7</sup> than the JESUS of that Gospel which he preached shew that it was only too possible to depart from the

<sup>1</sup> Three times in the First Epistle to the Corinthians S. Paul speaks of 'having delivered' to his converts certain 'traditions.'

<sup>1</sup> Cor. xi. 2, 23; xv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Acts i. 22; iv. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iv. 2.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. i. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Acts v. 42, R.V.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 4, ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν . . . εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον. Cf. Gal. i. 7, ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο, i.e. not merely another but different in kind altogether.

standard of belief as to our LORD's Person which the Apostles had received and which they delivered to their converts. Again, the Apostolic teaching must have contained definite instruction about the Sacraments: to 'repent and be baptized in the Name of JESUS CHRIST,'<sup>1</sup> to be baptized and to wash away sins,<sup>2</sup> to be baptized into the death of CHRIST,<sup>3</sup> 'in one Spirit to be baptized into one body,'<sup>4</sup> are expressions as to the practice and the doctrine of the one great Sacrament which imply definite teaching about it; whilst with regard to the other it is sufficient to mention the passages in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the first letter to Corinth<sup>5</sup> to shew that the Eucharist must have found a definite place in the Apostolic teaching, as without doubt it did in the Apostolic practice. So also with regard to man's social relations, the teaching about the Church—as the One Body into which he is baptized,<sup>6</sup> in which he is related to other men as in the natural body the various limbs and organs are related to one another each with its special function to perform,<sup>7</sup> in which he grows to the perfection of Christian manhood,<sup>8</sup> and in which he is called to the peace of CHRIST<sup>9</sup>—is the teaching which was

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 38.<sup>2</sup> Acts xxii. 16.<sup>3</sup> Rom. vi. 3.<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. x. 15-21; xi. 23-34.<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 14-27.<sup>8</sup> Eph. iv. 7-16.<sup>9</sup> Col. iii. 15.

afterwards summarised in the article of belief in the Church which is found in one of the earliest of the baptismal Creeds.<sup>1</sup>

Enough has perhaps been said to show that the first preachers of Christianity must have had a definite body of dogmatic belief on which their preaching was based and which is described, or at least implied, by such terms as 'the Faith', 'the form of doctrine,' 'the pattern of sound words' which we have already quoted, and probably also by other similar expressions such as are well known to any student of the Apostolic writings.<sup>2</sup>

As to how far such passages imply a definite formula or creed is a further question. There are at least three passages which suggest to the reader something like the articles of a Creed.

(1) In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, S. Paul says that he delivered to them that which he had received :

'That CHRIST died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

And that He was buried,

<sup>1</sup> Repentance, Remission of Sins, the Church, occur among the articles of a Confession of Faith in the writings of Tertullian (*circ.* 200). Maclear, *Introd. to the Creeds*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* ὁ κανὼν (Gal. vi. 17); τὸ μυστήριον τῆς εὐσεβείας (1 Tim. iii. 16); ἡ καλὴ ὁμολογία (1 Tim. vi. 12); ἡ παραθήκη (1 Tim. vi. 20). On the passages from the Pastoral Epistles see Bernard in *Cambridge Greek Testament*, *l.c.*

And that He rose again according to the Scriptures.’<sup>1</sup>

Here it will be noticed that both the arrangement of the passage and the words with which S. Paul introduces it are suggestive of a definite formula.

(2) The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions six ‘articles’ which he says are the very foundation of Christian teaching :

Repentance and Faith,  
Baptisms and Laying on of Hands,  
Resurrection from the Dead and Eternal Judgment.<sup>2</sup>

Here again, though the passage is not creed-like in form, we cannot help being reminded of the articles of early Creeds containing almost exactly the same ‘elements’ of belief.

(3) Again, in the First Epistle to Timothy,<sup>3</sup> S. Paul appears to be quoting from a creed-like hymn, where he says of our LORD—‘Who<sup>4</sup> was

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. vi. 1. Bishop Westcott (*in loc.*) points out that these three groups represent, respectively, ‘fundamental characteristics of the Christian’s temper, . . . outward ordinances, and specific beliefs. Under another aspect the three groups deal with our personal character, our social relations, our connexion with the unseen world.’

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Ancient authority on the whole is stronger for the ‘Who’ of the R.V., than for ‘GOD’ as in the A.V., though even if *ὁ* be

manifested in the flesh ;  
 justified in the spirit ;  
     seen of angels ;  
 preached among the nations ;  
 believed on in the world ;  
     received up in glory.'

But though the above passages may be quotations we cannot prove that they are so, nor should we expect to find the same clear-cut formularies in the first century that we find in the fourth, since it was only as the years went on that the preachers of Christianity found themselves obliged to lay down definite statements of belief against those who attacked or denied the Faith in its various parts. The great body of Christian doctrine before it came to be defined in later times was like the common-lands of England before they came to be encroached upon by private individuals; the formularies of later times are like the necessary fences set up to protect the latitude of the Faith against the narrowing tendencies of heretical teachers.<sup>1</sup>

the correct reading 'the sense is not really modified. The Pre-existence of the Subject of these lines lies in ἐφανερώθη. The New Testament knows of only One Being Who was manifested in human form, preached among the heathen, taken up in glory—the Only-begotten Son.'—Liddon, *First Epistle to Timothy*, p. 37.

<sup>1</sup> The illustration of the common-lands and the fences is Canon MacColl's, *Christianity in relation to Science*, p. 1.

It is however not the question whether the Church in the earliest days had definite formularies of belief or not, but whether she taught the truth which came to be embodied in the confessions of faith drawn up by the Councils in later years, whether, in particular, she held and taught that the Eternal Son of God, being of One Substance with the Father and by Whom all things were made, 'for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.' Was the Incarnation and the Virgin-Birth a part of the implicit Faith of the Church in the earliest ages or not? Was it contained in those 'traditions' which S. Paul says that he himself had received and which he delivered to his converts? It is very important to remember that before any such thing as a Creed can have been drawn up, before even the canonical Scriptures were written, and certainly long before they had come to be recognised as canonical, the Church was teaching orally. We should often find it much easier to understand the Holy Scriptures if we could bear it in mind that they did not come first, and that therefore they pre-suppose a body of teaching and a way of life which had been in existence for many years before even the earliest book of the New Testament was



written. And, as we have seen, the Holy Scriptures themselves bear witness to the existence of that body of teaching which must have contained definite information as to our LORD's Person and Life.<sup>1</sup> What that teaching contained in the particular of the Virgin-Birth we have now to discover; and we shall set about discovering it by appealing to various writers of the pre-conciliar period with a view to finding out whether from their writings we can establish anything like a consensus of testimony to the doctrine in question. This is in accordance with the advice given by S. Vincent in his famous *Commonitorium*. Where, from the nature of the case, we cannot appeal to the authority of a General Council, he bids us 'consult and examine the opinions of the Ancients compared with one another, of those at least who, although living at different times and in different places yet continuing in the communion and faith of the One Catholic Church, stand out as approved teachers.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> What Bishop Forbes says of the existence of the Church is true also of the existence of the body of doctrine which the existence of the Church implies. 'It is no vicious circle to say that Holy Scripture proves the existence of the Church, and that this, the Church, proves Holy Scripture. An ambassador comes to a king bearing his credentials in a letter. He himself is the authority for the genuineness of the letter: when the letter is opened, it is found to define the powers, plenipotentiary or other, of the messenger who brought it. Thus it is with Holy Scripture.'—Bp. Forbes, *XXXIX Articles*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Comm.* cap. 3.

It is, in other words, to the Voice of the *Ecclesia Diffusa* that we must listen where it is impossible to hear the Voice of the *Ecclesia Congregata*.

Now, in the matter before us, the voice of the 'approved teachers' of the early Church is perfectly clear and unanimous.

First, S. Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, whose great age at the time of his death<sup>1</sup> makes it almost certain that he was born in our LORD's earthly lifetime, probable that he knew S. Peter and S. Paul, and more than probable that he had heard S. John, writes as though he had no uncertainty whatever as to the fact of our LORD's Incarnation and miraculous Birth. His teaching, says Bishop Lightfoot, 'exhibits plainly enough, though in rougher outline and without his preciseness of definition, the same insistence on the twofold nature of CHRIST . . . which distinguished the teaching of the great Athanasius two centuries and a half later.'<sup>2</sup> But although a belief in the Incarnation seems always with the Fathers to have implied belief in the Virgin-Birth,<sup>3</sup> S. Ignatius leaves us in no uncertainty in the matter. In a remarkable passage he speaks of 'the

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lightfoot dates his martyrdom in A.D. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Bp. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, part ii. vol. i. p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 49. 'There are no believers in the Incarnation discoverable, who are not also believers in the Virgin-Birth.'

virginity of Mary and her Child-bearing, like as also the Death of the LORD' as 'three mysteries of loud proclamation.'<sup>1</sup> In another passage he speaks of the LORD as 'truly born of a virgin.'<sup>2</sup> To appreciate the value of the witness of S. Ignatius we must remember that he was Bishop of the important city of Antioch, and as such represented the teaching of a Church which had been founded by Apostles, that he commenced his Episcopate at a time when certainly S. John, and possibly others of the Apostles, must have been still living, and that his letters which are addressed to Churches at a great distance from his own assume that the truths to which he alludes are the common property of both.

From S. Ignatius in the East we pass to S. Irenæus in the West. S. Irenæus became Bishop of Lyons about the year 177, and, as with S. Ignatius, the value of his testimony is greatly enhanced if we take account of his personal history, for, although a Western Bishop, he was directly connected with the East, and in his childhood had sat at the feet of S. Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna who himself was

<sup>1</sup> S. Ignatius, *Ephes.* 19, *τρία μυστήρια κραυγῆς*. The translation is Canon Gore's. Whatever else the passage may mean, and it is difficult to understand *κραυγῆς* otherwise, it is at least clear that S. Ignatius reckons the mystery of the Virgin-Birth on the same footing of importance as the mystery of our LORD's Death.

<sup>2</sup> S. Ignatius, *Smyrn.* i.

a disciple of S. John. When we add to these facts his great learning and his evident knowledge of yet another part of the Church, the Church of Rome itself, we shall understand how wide-spread and weighty the testimony of S. Irenæus is; when he speaks, as he does, of the whole Church though scattered over the whole world and speaking many languages yet holding the same Faith, we feel that he is speaking not merely from hearsay but from personal knowledge. We find in the writings of S. Irenæus if not the *ipsissima verba* yet the paraphrase of a Creed which he declares that the whole Church has received 'from the Apostles and their disciples'; among the articles of that Creed occur the words 'and the birth of the Virgin,' and he goes on to say that the summary of the Faith which he has given, in which is included the Incarnation and the Virgin-Birth, has been received by the whole Church and that there is no other tradition or belief either in Germany or in Spain, or among the Kelts, or in Egypt, or in Libya, or in the East, or in Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

Tertullian in North Africa (about A.D. 210)<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> S. Iren., *C. Hæres.*, I. x. 1, 2. See the whole passage in Dr. Heurtley's *De Fide et Symbolo*, p. 29 f. Some translate 'Italy' instead of 'Palestine.'

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis*, c. i. See Heurtley *u. supra*, p. 32.

Aristides at Athens (about A.D. 130),<sup>1</sup> S. Justin Martyr in Palestine and at Rome<sup>2</sup> (about A.D. 140) may all be cited as witnesses in the pre-conciliar period to the implicit faith of the Church as to the two Natures in the One Person of the Word Incarnate and as to their miraculous union in the womb of a Virgin Mother. To them may be added the witness of the Clementine Liturgy 'representing fairly the pre-Constantinian Liturgy of about the middle of the third century,' which, if it be true that 'lex supplicandi' is 'lex credendi,' bears certainly an emphatic, and we may say undesigned, testimony to the Faith in our LORD's Person which was afterwards set forth with such clearness and precision in the Catholic Creeds.<sup>3</sup>

There is one other form of testimony which must be mentioned, the testimony, namely, of those heretics who denied the Incarnation, for the mere fact of there being heresy of an early date on the subject must at least prove that the Faith from which the heresy revolted must be earlier still. The germ of the heresy may be traced back to the times of the Apostles themselves, for we find S. John speaking in his Epistles with great severity both

<sup>1</sup> Aristides, *Apology*. See Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> S. Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, 85. See Gore, *Dissertations*, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> See especially the great 'Preface' in the Clementine Liturgy in Hammond's *Liturgies*, p. 16 (Oxford, 1878).

of those on the one hand who denied 'that JESUS is the CHRIST'<sup>1</sup> and of those on the other who denied 'that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh.'<sup>2</sup> And we find early heresies at the end of the first and at the beginning of the second century whilst in some sense accepting JESUS as the CHRIST, the Messiah foretold of prophecy, yet denying both the Incarnation and the Virgin-Birth. So far as can be discovered there was no such position possible in early days as that which has become somewhat prominent in modern times, the attempt, namely, to hold the one without the other, simply because the principle which led Ebionites and Cerinthians to deny the Virgin-Birth led them also to deny any real assumption of flesh by the Son of God. Judaistic heresy<sup>3</sup> was inclined to reject, and Oriental heresy rejected on principle, any doctrine, such as that of the Incarnation, which implied that there was no inherent evil in matter. God could not

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. John ii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 S. John iv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> It is not of course intended to imply that there was anything whatever in the Old Testament to justify a belief in the inherent evil of matter, but there was certainly a tendency in what may be called the 'false Judaism' of the first two centuries to put GOD at a great distance from His own Creation which resulted in a tendency to deny the reality of the Incarnation. The Ebionites for the most part disbelieved in the Virgin-Birth, and, at the same time, did not believe that there was any real union between the CHRIST and the son, as they thought, of Joseph and Mary.



really 'touch' human nature, because human nature partook of the evil which was in the material creation from the beginning. God could not, whether by a virgin-birth or in any other way, really enter into personal relations with the human race. This was the position of the heretics who were influenced by the dualistic tendencies of non-Christian Oriental religious systems. Thus we see that the whole principle of the Incarnation was in question; but it was in question without the Church, not within it, and the denial by heresy only serves to confirm the position of the doctrine as an accepted truth from the very earliest times within the Church.

There is then abundance of evidence, running up to the time when the Apostles were actually teaching among men, and not confined to any one particular part of the Church, that the belief in the Incarnation and in the miraculous Birth was, even though unformulated to the extent which it afterwards became, yet firmly established, and only questioned outside the Church.

Two questions may here be fitly discussed: (1) as to the reasons for the absence of dogmatic statements in the early centuries such as we find during the period of the great Councils, and, (2), as to the sense in which we may be allowed to use the

term 'development' in describing the relation of the Faith of the fourth century as expressed in the great Councils to that of the first and second as expressed by the Canonical Scriptures and the writings of the Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic Fathers.

(1) The first question admits of a very simple answer. The absence of dogmatic statements in the first three centuries is due partly to the absence or need for them, partly to the circumstances of the time which made the enunciation of such statements almost impossible. In those centuries the Church was largely occupied with questions which did not directly involve the doctrine of the Incarnation; she was concerned first of all with the great heresies which we know as Gnosticism and Manichæism, of which the primary reference was to Creation and the Origin of Evil; she had also to contend with the heresies of a disciplinary nature which are known as Montanism and Novatianism; and it was not till the third century that the heresies of the Monarchian type, which were concerned with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, led on to definite heresy as to our LORD'S PERSON.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These heresies arose out of the attempt to explain the doctrine of the Holy Trinity—to reconcile 'the fundamental doctrine of the Divine Unity (*μοναρχία*) with that of the Three-fold Name.' See Robertson, *Church History*, vol. i. p. 154 ff.

Further, we must remember that dogmatic formularies are uttered by the Voice of the *Ecclesia Congregata* rather than by that of the *Ecclesia Diffusa*, and until the time when the Empire became Christian it was impossible for the Church to do more than to hold merely local synods which could do little else than settle the troubles of the diocese, or at best of the province, in which they were held; they could in no sense legislate or dogmatise for the whole Church. Throughout the first three centuries, and in fact until the promulgation of the Edict of Milan by Constantine in A.D. 313, the Church was undergoing persecution, existing, as it were, only on sufferance, and very far indeed from being able to hold the great assemblies which characterise her history in the fourth and fifth centuries.

(2) The second question may also be answered in very few words, but those words require some explanation. If it be asked how far the term 'development' may be used to express the relation, for example, between the theology of S. Athanasius or S. Cyril and that of S. Paul, the answer must be that the term proposed would only be allowable so far as phraseology is concerned. There is certainly development with regard to the expression, there is no development with regard to the

substance, of the doctrine. What is implicit tends to become explicit. The Church had to think out what she believed, and her thoughts necessarily found expression, whether in teaching or in defending the Faith. The precise and clear-cut statements of the Creeds represent, it is true, a development of phraseology from the simpler language of earlier writers, but that does not mean that they evolved out of the simpler statements a doctrine not already there. It was the common taunt of the heretics condemned by the different Councils that the Church used terms which were not to be found in the Holy Scriptures or in early writers, and it is perfectly true that the Church did use such terms; but the use of them is only a reproach if by them she meant to express some doctrine alien to the sense of the earlier and simpler expressions. As a matter of fact the Church had to discover, and even to coin, language which might truly express, so far as human words could truly express, her implicit Faith. The Faith itself 'once for all delivered'<sup>1</sup> to the Saints of old is as incapable of being added to as it is of being diminished, but it was inevitable

<sup>1</sup> S. Jude 3, *τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει*. The meaning of *ἅπαξ* is, as the R.V. translates, 'once for all,' with the idea of something done once and not repeated.

that the terminology in which the Faith came to be expressed should develop, according as it was applied to the needs of successive ages, or as error arose in various directions which called out new and hitherto unperceived aspects of the unchanging Truth. A sentence from the same treatise of S. Vincent of Lerins quoted above is well worth quoting here. It shews how completely an orthodox teacher of the fifth century<sup>1</sup> perceived the relation of the dogmatic teaching with which he was familiar to the less precise theology of the earlier Fathers. 'The Church of CHRIST,' he says, 'the careful and cautious guardian of the doctrines committed to her charge, changes nothing that is in them, diminishes nothing, adds nothing; things that are necessary she cuts not off, things superfluous she does not add. . . . This only and nothing besides has the Catholic Church, when aroused by the novelties of heretics, effected by the decrees of her Councils, namely to consign to posterity by a written decree what she had first received from her ancestors by tradition alone, comprehending in few words a great sum of things, and in fact, for the sake of clearness, stamping with a new and appro-

<sup>1</sup> S. Vincent died about A.D. 450, about twenty years, that is, after the date of the Council of Ephesus, and so in the very midst of that doctrinal activity which characterised the fourth and fifth centuries.

priate term that sense of the Faith which was not new.’<sup>1</sup>

This then is the sense in which we can accept and use the term development to express the relation of Conciliar to Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic theology—there is a development of phraseology, and that not only legitimate but necessary, from the one to the other. That development of phraseology is an entirely different matter from development in substance or in sense may be more clearly perceived if we turn to Cardinal Newman’s use of the term development as a justification or explanation of certain modern doctrines. Such doctrines, for example, as those of the Immaculate Conception and of Papal Infallibility may be ‘developed’ out of earlier theology, but if so it is something much more than a mere development of terminology; it is a development which has resulted in something very like the contradiction of other articles of that body of doctrine from which it is developed. Development in the substance of what is revealed implies that those who first received the revelation did not know what came to be known to those who came after, whilst development in phraseology simply means that what was revealed once for all to the Apostles came to be more fully expressed,

<sup>1</sup> *Commonitorium*, cap. 23 *ad finem*.



the substance remaining always unchanged, in response to the needs of those who came after them.<sup>1</sup> In the Immaculate Conception, for example, the Roman Church claims to know something which the Apostles did not know, something which has been revealed neither to the Eastern nor to the English Church; whilst on the other hand in the doctrine of the *ὁμοούσιον* the Council of Nicæa did but express what was implied in the theological language of S. Paul and S. John, what was in fact the implicit faith of the whole Church from the beginning.

We may perhaps summarise the doctrinal history of the period which preceded the Age of the Councils, at least so far as the doctrine of the Incarnation is concerned, somewhat as follows. The Apostles were left by our LORD with the charge to teach and to baptize all nations,<sup>2</sup> and with the promise that the Holy Ghost should come and

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Pusey expresses the position of, at any rate, the English Church with regard to development when he says, 'He, "the Spirit of Truth," was to teach the Apostles *the whole truth*. It was a personal promise to the Apostles and fulfilled in them. The Church of this day cannot know more than S. John, else the promise would not have been fulfilled to him, that GOD the Holy Ghost should teach him *the whole truth*. Whatever the Apostles received, *that* they were enjoined to teach,' etc.—*Eirenicon*, part i, p. 85. See also Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 424-433 (ed. 3).

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. xxviii. 19.

‘teach them all things’ and ‘guide them into all the truth.’<sup>1</sup> That promise was fulfilled, as we believe, on the Day of Pentecost, and the Apostles went forth equipped with power from on high to teach and to baptize as the LORD had commanded them. At first their teaching consisted in the simple proclamation that ‘JESUS is the LORD,’ as witnessed to by the Resurrection; but, as time went on and as many came to believe on that Name, Christians themselves would want to know more about His Person and His Life, and narratives would begin to appear, as S. Luke tells us they did appear, giving more or less accurate accounts of the things which Christians believed. Then the Apostles, seeing the necessity of providing an authentic record, and knowing that the time was not long before they would have to put off the tabernacle of the flesh,<sup>2</sup> were moved by the Holy Ghost to commit to writing a true narrative of those facts which till then they had delivered orally to their converts. They had documents which they could use, eye-witnesses whom they could consult; above all they

<sup>1</sup> S. John xiv. 26; xvi. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 S. Pet. i. 15. It is not at all improbable that the Gospel of S. Mark was the result of S. Peter’s ‘endeavour’ that after his decease those to whom he was writing ‘might have these things always in remembrance.’

had that infallible Guide whose office it was to teach them all things and to bring all things to their remembrance. So the Gospels were written; and to those inspired accounts all teaching thenceforward appealed for confirmation and testing. Then one by one the Apostles and those who had seen and known our LORD in the Flesh went to their rest, and the Church was left to the guidance and rule of their successors. We do not know to what extent the Apostles left behind them definite formularies and articles of the Faith, though some such seem to be implied, as we have seen, in some of their Epistles; at the very least there was the formula of Baptism and the creed-like sentences in some of S. Paul's Epistles. But whether there were authoritative formularies or not, the Sacred Deposit of the Faith, the Form of Sound Words, the Mystery of Godliness, had been committed to the guardianship of the Church to be taught to her children, and to be defended against her enemies. And so it came to pass that little by little, either as teacher or defender of the Faith, the Church was led or compelled to formulate and define and express that Faith in the Incarnation which implicitly she had held from the very beginning. Many circumstances, as we have seen, combined to delay the promulgation of an authoritative Formula

in which every Christian might confess with his lips the sum of the articles of his heart's belief. Ten great persecutions followed each other during the second and third centuries of the Church's life; great questions stirred her within; no sooner had the Fall of Jerusalem settled for ever all danger of re-absorption into Judaism than Oriental speculators as to Creation and the origin of Evil began to attempt to graft Christianity on to their own systems, and then calling themselves Christians to claim to represent the Faith; in the second century the great writers of the Church were engaged in 'apologising,' or giving reasons for the hope that was in them, to those without,<sup>1</sup> whose curiosity had been aroused by the spectacle of this strange Society claiming whilst in the world yet not to be of it. But there were many indications that sooner or later the Church would be driven to define accurately what she believed as to the Person of her Founder; even at the close of the first century there were those who, either in a Humanitarian or in a Sabellian direc-

<sup>1</sup> Thus we have the anonymous 'Epistle to Diognetus,' the Apologies of Quadratus and of Aristides (both addressed to the Emperor Hadrian), the First Apology of S. Justin Martyr (addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius), the Second Apology of S. Justin (addressed to the Roman Senate), the 'Octavius' of Minucius Felix, the Apology of Tertullian, the Apology of Claudius Apollinaris, the Apology of Melito of Sardis, all belonging to the second century.

tion,<sup>1</sup> were beginning to trench upon the truth of the twofold Nature in the One Person of the Word Incarnate, though it was not till the third century that the heresies which arose out of speculations as to the relation to One Another of the Persons of the Eternal Trinity rose to so high a pitch as to demand some such mode of settlement as that which only became possible to the Church when, in the fourth century, she found herself free from those hindrances to action which the antagonism of the Empire had till then placed in her way. The fourth century opened in the midst of the most awful storm of persecution which the Church had ever undergone, but the calm was at hand, and with the accession of Constantine the Great we enter upon a period which has had nothing parallel to it either before or since in its great doctrinal importance.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Though Sabellianism proper belongs to the third century the term is convenient to denote earlier forms of heresy which sought to guard the Unity of the GODHEAD by minimising the Personality of the Three Blessed Persons.

<sup>2</sup> It has been thought better not to go into detail as to the heresies concerned with the Being and Nature of GOD which preceded the Age of the Great Councils. The heresies of the second and third centuries will be found tabulated at the end of this volume. See Note B.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE

#### A. *At the Council of Nicæa.*

No man can say that JESUS is the LORD but by the HOLY GHOST.—1 Cor. xii. 3.

The GODHEAD of the Father, of the Son, and of the HOLY GHOST is all One: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.—*Ath. Creed.*

THE history of the period which we are about to consider is the history of the gradual expression of the mind and consciousness of the Church 'by the power of the Holy Ghost'<sup>1</sup> and 'to the Glory of GOD the Father'<sup>2</sup> that 'JESUS is the LORD.' It is the history of unflinching steadfastness and of miserable inconsistency, of uncompromising courage and of pitiful time-serving, of clear and outspoken statement and of disingenuous attempts to escape from the meaning of words. It is the record of persecution and imprisonment and exile and mar-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 11.



tyrdom bravely endured for the sake of the truth. It is the chronicle of debate and argument and controversy. And through it all there was gradually being wrought out that clear and unwavering confession of the Faith which we who have entered into the labours of our fathers have received from them as a sacred 'deposit' to hand on to our children. Shame on us who repeat so glibly and so heedlessly the tremendous words of the Creed which were made sure to the Church at the cost of the struggles and the tears and the blood of those upon whom in the Providence of God came the task of welding together the watchwords of the Catholic Faith.

For at such a cost it was that the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries gave her answer to the question, 'What think ye of CHRIST?' That answer was given categorically by the Great Councils which we now speak of as general or œcumenical,<sup>1</sup> but we must not forget that the answer so given was the outcome of far more than the deliberations and discussions of the Œcumenical Councils themselves. Rather it was the outcome of the lives and deaths of those who took part in them, and was prepared for and succeeded by events which even

<sup>1</sup> See Note C at the end of this volume on 'General and Œcumenical Councils.'

apart from their actual connection with the great question in dispute are fraught with tremendous interests of their own.

It will be well at the outset to ask ourselves what is meant by an Œcumenical Council—what it is which makes a council œcumenical—what test we are to apply to any given council with a view to deciding as to whether it is œcumenical or not. And the only right answer to such a question is that the test of a council's œcumenicity is its *after-acceptance by the whole Church*. A council is not œcumenical, as we might have thought, because the whole Church was represented at its deliberations, but because it truly expressed the mind of the Church, and it is obvious that the question whether such expression was a true one or not could only be decided by the consent of the whole Church given, perhaps only gradually, in the years succeeding the promulgation of the council's decrees. Two illustrations may be given of this—the Council of Ariminum in A.D. 359 was a larger council than even Nicæa itself and was certainly intended to be œcumenical, yet it actually denied the Faith; whilst that of Constantinople in A.D. 381, which is now accepted as œcumenical by the universal Church, was no more than a Council of Eastern Bishops. 'The inerrancy of a Council can never be guaran-

teed at the moment. The test of the value of a council is its after-reception by the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Œcumenical Councils, we may say, look both forward and backward—backward to the implicit teaching and mind of the Church from the beginning which they claim to express, and forward to the judgment of the whole Church on their claim to express her mind. So, before we pass on, we may impress upon ourselves two facts by way of caution: (1) not to regard these, or in fact any, councils as promulgating something fresh to be believed by the Church which was not believed before, but rather as giving expression and making explicit what was always implicit from the beginning—not, that is, as revealing the Truth but as witnessing to it, and (2) not to allow ourselves to imagine that there is any ‘short cut’ to arriving at the Truth. If the Fathers of the Ancient and Undivided Church discovered the mind of the Church as to the fundamental doctrine of our LORD’s Person only at the cost of such tremendous and unceasing pains, nay more if the Apostles themselves were left in uncertainty as to Who and What He was when one word from Him would have made all clear, are we to wonder, or to complain, if now we are left to arrive at the Truth on so many

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Forbes, *XXXIX Articles*, p. 229.

points on which we fain would know it by methods which we may find troublesome and even painful? Certainly there is nothing in the history of the period which we are considering, as also there is nothing in the Holy Scriptures themselves, to lead us to suppose that it is the Will of God to reveal to us, at any given moment without trouble on our part, the eternal truths about Himself and the truths about His dealings with us in time. Rather it would seem that it is God's Will to train us by the discipline and probation of uncertainty into the fulness of the stature of manhood in the Faith.

So much may be said, at the outset, with regard to what is meant by an Œcumenical Council, and to what is implied in that meaning. Bearing this in mind, we pass on to consider what the answer was which the Œcumenical Councils gave to that momentous question of the LORD Himself, 'What think ye of CHRIST?' or, to put it in other words, how they bore witness, and gave expression, to that mind of the Church which, informed by the teaching of our LORD and of His Apostles, had as yet not been expressed in all its fulness in the centuries which preceded the Council of Nicæa.

The plan will be, in this and subsequent chapters, to speak first of the doctrine and then of the history, although it will not be possible to avoid

some repetition, as history and doctrine must inevitably run into each other.

The doctrine on which the Council of Nicæa expressed the mind of the Church was the doctrine of the Very and Eternal GODHEAD of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. We need not now say anything about that doctrine as it is revealed in Holy Scripture, because it has been already treated of in that connection in a previous chapter. We need only remind ourselves, in passing, that our LORD's own witness to His GODHEAD may be described as the witness of a great claim. He claimed, in His earthly life, to be that which He could not be unless He were more than man, to be that indeed which could be warranted only on the supposition that He was God, 'equal to the Father as touching His GODHEAD.'

'He Who took his sovereign station  
Where no angel durst come nigh,  
Would be neither saint nor prophet  
Were He less than God most high.'<sup>1</sup>

So, too, when we pass on to consider the language of S. Paul and S. John, the terms in which they speak of the Person and Work of our LORD are perfectly consistent with the belief in His very and eternal GODHEAD, whilst they can only be explained on any other hypothesis with the utmost difficulty:

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *Hymns and Other Verses*, p. 5.

rather the attempt so to explain them results most often in explaining them away.

The Church then could send back her children to the Holy Scriptures for the proof of those things which she had taught them before admitting them to Baptism, but it must not be thought that either the Holy Scriptures or the teaching of the Church presented no difficulty to those who anxiously considered them. And the main difficulty arose from the apparent difficulty of reconciling what might appear, at first sight, the conflicting statements of Holy Scripture and of the Church that our LORD JESUS CHRIST was truly the Son of God, and was yet Himself co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. The Catholic Church insisted on holding firmly and uncompromisingly to both those statements or dogmas ; the sects which, in the early centuries before the Council of Nicæa, split off from the Church, as a rule only contrived to emphasise and explain one statement by denying the other. Speaking roughly, the early sects who separated from the Church on the question of our LORD'S Person may be divided into those, on the one hand, who so emphasised the truth of our LORD'S Sonship as to make Him a mere man, and those, on the other, who so emphasised His true Godhead as to forget altogether about His Sonship, and, in effect,



to merge His Divinity in that of the Eternal Father. He was not, so they said, a Person 'by Himself.' This latter school of thought is usually called Sabellianism, after one of its prominent leaders named Sabellius. Sabellianism denied, in fact, that truth which the *Quicunque* asserts in the words: 'There is One Person of the Father, Another of the Son, and Another of the Holy Ghost.' And again—

' . . . We are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be GOD and LORD.'

Sabellianism spoke of Father Son and Holy Ghost as being merely three aspects or three manifestations of the One GODHEAD; it was so anxious to safeguard the Divine Unity that it denied any personal distinction within the Unity, and thus emptied the words 'Son' and 'Father' of any real meaning; they were but aspects or manifestations according to Sabellius. The Catholic Church, while never for one moment letting go of the fundamental truth of the Divine Unity, clung at the same time to the other truth that within that Unity there are Three Persons, and that the Son is truly a Son begotten of the Father, and that the Holy Ghost proceeds from Both. 'Like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by Himself to be GOD and LORD;

so are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, There be three GODS or three LORDS.'

The reason for dwelling thus far upon Sabellianism is because it has a direct connection with the heresy of Arius, which the Council of Nicæa condemned. It is probably true to say that all heresy is either a reaction from some other error or else an exaggeration of some truth. Arianism was both; it reacted from the heresy of Sabellius, which (again to use the language of the Quicunque) 'confounded the Persons' of the Blessed Trinity, and, whilst so reacting, exaggerated the truth that our LORD is truly the Son of GOD, making Him in fact so distinct from the Other Divine Persons as to end by saying that He is not Divine at all.

Arianism appealed to logic. If the Son be truly a son, then He must be subsequent to the Father: if He is subsequent to the Father, then He is not co-eternal: but eternity is an essential attribute of GOD; therefore, if the Son is not eternal, He is not of the same essence with the Father, therefore He is not GOD. It was not a long step from this to deny that the Son was uncreate, and if He was not uncreate, He must be a creature.

The fundamental error of Arianism was its attempt, by resort to human logic, to reconcile statements, apparently conflicting, which GOD had

not reconciled. The attempt to apply logical syllogisms to God's Revelation of Himself resulted, as it always must result, in error. Arianism erred in saying that a son must be subsequent to his father: there is that 'must' in any question of human sonship, but we have no warrant for asserting the same 'must' when the question is that of the unique relation between the Co-eternal Persons of the Sacred TRINITY. For we have to remember here, and wherever we speak or think about God, that His Revelation of Himself is made to us in such terms as we can understand, and so here we use the terms Son and Father as expressing truly, as exactly as human language can express it, the relationship of the One to the Other, but we have no right to import into those terms the exact meanings which they have when subject to human conditions.

The battle of Arianism raged round the expression *ὁμοούσιον*, which we translate in the Nicene Creed by the three words 'of one substance'; the Arians would not say that our LORD was 'of one substance' with the Father, to say which would have been to imply His co-eternity, whilst at the same time they shrank from admitting that which their own denial of unity of substance implied, namely, that He was a creature; the whole history

of the Arian conflict subsequent to Nicæa is a history of their attempts to get out of saying either.

We may turn now to the history of the events which led up to the Council of Nicæa.

At the beginning of the fourth century, in the year 302, the last and worst of the Ten General Persecutions broke out under the Emperor Diocletian. It was the most awful and most systematic persecution which the Church had ever known, but there followed it, as in the Providence of God there followed every persecution, a period of rest and peace, due to the gradual subjugation of the whole Empire by one man, the Emperor Constantine, and to his conversion to Christianity. Constantine inherited from his father a policy of toleration towards the Christians, but it does not seem that he was in any real sense a Christian himself. In October A.D. 312 as he was on his way to give battle to the usurper Maxentius, Constantine, as he himself affirmed on oath to the historian Eusebius, had a vision which determined his future attitude towards the religion of CHRIST. He saw about mid-day in the air a cross of light with the inscription 'In this conquer,'<sup>1</sup> and in a dream our LORD appeared to him holding in His Hands the symbol—a Cross combined with the first three letters of the Name of

<sup>1</sup> τοῦτω νικᾷ. See Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* i. 28.

CHRIST—which became thenceforward the standard of the Roman Army. Constantine defeated Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge, and from that time forward became the champion and protector of Christianity. He did not receive Baptism until he was on his death-bed, five-and-twenty years later, either from an unwillingness to commit himself without reserve to all that the Christian religion demanded, or simply in conformity with a custom, only too prevalent at the time, of deferring Baptism till there should be no fear of soiling Baptismal innocence by an unworthy life.

There is no reason to think that Constantine was a Christian from anything but sincere conviction, and the fact that policy pointed to Christianity as the great need of the Empire at the time ought not to make us doubt his sincerity. At the same time we must not forget the political side of the question, and indeed we shall not understand Constantine's attitude towards Christianity itself if we do forget it. Constantine saw, as Diocletian saw before him, that the Empire needed a recognised religion. Diocletian made the mistake, politically, of thinking that Neo-Platonism, the philosophic form of heathenism, was the religion which could save and purify the Empire; so he persecuted Christianity. Constantine, on the other

hand, saw in the religion which his predecessor had persecuted the ally which he needed in his great plans for the social purification and for the unification of the Empire. Constantine's desire, we may almost call it his passion, for unity is the key to a great part of his policy: we can imagine his disappointment when after some years he found that the unity of the Church herself was threatened by the outbreak of a heresy which bid fair to break her to pieces. We shall see how his determination to secure unity at all costs accounts partly for his unsatisfactory position with regard to Arianism, making him think that unity however secured was more important than what seemed to him only a dispute about a trifling matter.

Let us turn from the State to the Church.

The two Edicts of Milan, put forth by Constantine in A.D. 312 and 313, allowed entire toleration to Christianity and all other religions, and the second edict further decreed restoration of all buildings which had been taken from the Church during the late persecution. So the Church had rest: she was free to restore the buildings which it had been the special object of the Tenth Persecution to destroy; she was able to replace the copies of the Holy Scriptures and of the Divine Liturgies which the Tenth Persecution had been especially zealous



in destroying; and she could now turn her attention to the surging questions within her own borders which were threatening the purity of her Faith.

With the great disciplinary heresy called Donatism which was now raging in North Africa we have no immediate concern, except perhaps to notice that the appeal of the Donatists to the civil power for a decision of the question between them and the Catholic Church, and the calling of the great Council of Arles (at which three British bishops were present) by the Emperor in A.D. 314 to consider the question, established the precedent for two things which became of great importance in the future history of the Church, (1) the interference, or at least the active interest, of the civil power in Church questions, and, (2), the calling together by the Emperors of Councils representative of the Church in all parts of their Empire. Before the Council of Arles, the councils which had met from time to time to consider questions of doctrine and discipline had, of necessity, been little more than local assemblies of bishops: Arles was a synod representative of the whole West.<sup>1</sup>

But it was no question of discipline, such as Donatism, which was the real danger of the Church at this moment: it was the far more deep-seated

<sup>1</sup> See *Church Historical Society Lectures*, series II. p. 159 ff.

and insidious danger which was attacking the very Rock on which she was built, the rock of her Faith in the Divine Person of her Founder. Already, as we have seen, the attempt in one direction or the other to dogmatise on the Doctrine of our LORD's Person had resulted in error of various kinds, but each heresy as it arose had been condemned by the Church, acting as a rule through her local synods and councils; it was only now, when the Edicts of Milan had freed the Church from external trouble, that heresy was able to assume the proportions which, under the name of Arianism, became so enormous as to threaten her very existence.

Arius was a Libyan, born towards the end of the third century. In the year 313 we find him a parish-priest at Alexandria where the parochial system was already developed. His training in the School of Antioch, distinguished as that school had always been for great literalness in its interpretation of Holy Scripture, and for a great fondness for logical formularies, had naturally predisposed him to exaggerate the sense in which Holy Scripture speaks of our LORD as the Son of GOD, without any regard to those other expressions of Holy Scripture which clearly imply the co-eternity and co-equality of the Son with the Father.

In the year 319, Alexander, the Archbishop of

Alexandria, delivered a charge to his clergy on the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, to which Arius took exception, as being, in his opinion, Sabellian in its tendency, minimising, that is, the distinction of the Blessed Persons in the One GODHEAD. Arius himself then began actively to propagate his own views as to our LORD's Sonship. If He is a Son, He must be subsequent in His Existence to the Father Who begat Him; if He is subsequent, once He was not; if once He was not, He is not God, co-eternal, co-equal with the Father: and so on.

Alexander tried to reclaim Arius, but was at last forced to excommunicate him. The next step was the calling of a council of the bishops of the Alexandrian Patriarchate,<sup>1</sup> about one hundred in number, which met at Alexandria about the year 320: at this Council Arius openly maintained that our LORD was in fact *created*, before all time it is true, but yet only the Only-Begotten Son of God in the sense that He was created before all creatures. It is obvious that, if this were the truth, our LORD could only be God in a very secondary sense, and that the Arians in fact laid themselves open to the charge of idolatry, seeing that they admitted our LORD to be adorable and yet believed Him to be, at best, only the most exalted of creatures.

<sup>1</sup> On the Patriarchates, see Note D at the end of this volume.

The Alexandrian Council condemned Arius, together with two bishops, five priests, and six deacons. Arius left Egypt, and, after some stay in Palestine and Syria, found a welcome with the ambitious and unscrupulous Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, who had been trained with him at Antioch, and who was now the constant adviser of the Emperor. It was probably under his influence that Constantine wrote to Alexander and Arius, trying to make out that the controversy between them was of no moment, and that on all vital points they were really at one. But it was of no use: no one who really knew or thought much about the matter could agree to treat the question between Alexander and Arius as of no moment; it concerned not merely theological truth but practical Christian life. And the Emperor soon found that he had no power to settle off-hand the question which was beginning to engage the attention of the whole of Christendom; and so at last it came about that he devised the plan of a great council which, as Arles had settled the question of Donatism, might in its turn settle the far more serious question of the opinions of Arius.

The great Council was summoned, and met in the Cathedral of Nicæa in Bithynia on the 19th of June A.D. 325. Over three hundred bishops were present,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The traditional number is 318.

representing nearly every part of the Empire; on a throne in the midst of the Council was placed a copy of the Holy Gospels, symbolising the appeal of the Church to that which was written and her claim to express what was therein revealed. We do not know who presided over the assembly: it is at least clear that the Bishop of Rome did not, for he was absent on account of his great age, and was only represented by two priests: it is probable that either Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, or Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch was the president.<sup>1</sup> In attendance on the Archbishop of Alexandria was a young man, a deacon, round whom and against whom in the years to come the battle of Arianism seemed to concentrate all its fierceness, who stood alone at a time when all seemed lost—the great, the holy, the learned Athanasius. He was present, as a deacon, at Nicæa.

The Council sat until August 25: its great, though not its only, work was its condemnation of Arianism and its drawing up and acceptance of the Creed which in its revised form is now recited by the whole Church, Eastern and Western, at the Celebration of the Mysteries. That Creed

<sup>1</sup> Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 142-4 (pp. 137-8 in ed. 3); Bright, *History of the Church from A.D. 313 to A.D. 451*, p. 22. If Hosius presided, it was not as a legate of the Pope: see Puller, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-72 (ed. 3).

asserts that He in Whom we believe is God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God, Begotten not made, Being of one substance, or essence, with the Father. It was no one-sided statement: whilst the assertion of the one substance lays stress on the unity, its explanation in the phrases *GOD from GOD, Light from Light, True GOD from True GOD, Begotten not made*, safeguards the distinction of Persons and the reality of the Sonship.

The Council appended to the Creed certain anathemas: 'But those who say, Once He was not; and before He was begotten He was not; and He came into existence out of nothing; or who say that the Son of God is of another substance, or essence, or is created, or mutable, or changeable, are anathematised by the Catholic and Apostolic Church.'

Seventeen bishops only refused to sign the Creed: but in the end all except two gave way, even Eusebius of Nicomedia signing, though in a dishonest sense, and not as meaning to be bound by his own action. The two who still held out were sent into exile by the Emperor, together with Arius himself.

So the Catholic Faith triumphed at Nicæa, but the end was not yet. There followed a succession of events which for a time all but undid the work



of the Council; round the person of Athanasius and round the phrase *ὁμοούσιον* there was to rage a conflict unsurpassed in the history of the Church. That conflict we shall consider in our study of the period which elapsed before the meeting of the First Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. We will only now, in conclusion, try to gain some idea of what was at stake in the great question of our LORD's Very and Eternal GODHEAD which, always implicitly held by the Church, was made explicit by the decrees of the First Œcumenical Council.

We may ask ourselves firstly wherein lay the attraction of Arianism. And the answer must be (1) that the claim of Arius to do away with mystery and to explain clearly the relation of the Blessed Persons to One Another was one reason which commended Arianism to many minds, (2) that there were many who welcomed what was really a retrograde movement towards polytheism in the setting up of a kind of inferior Deity to whom they might bow down, and (3) that a real dread of Sabellianism, which Arius conceived himself to be combating, made many persons think that in Arianism lay the best way of escape from it; in these things perhaps lay something of the attraction of Arianism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Bright, *History of the Church from A.D. 313 to A.D. 451*, pp. 13, 14.

On the other hand we have to ask what was really involved in the denial of co-eternal and co-equal GODHEAD to our LORD, what in fact made Athanasius and others like him willing to endure all things rather than rest for one moment from the conflict. It was that they perceived that, under the pretence of explaining, Arius was explaining away, under the attempt to emphasise the true and proper Sonship of our LORD he was in effect making Him no Son at all, in the wish to avoid Sabellianism he was in truth re-acting into error as bad as, if not far worse than, that from which he re-acted. For, after all, the Arian CHRIST was not the CHRIST of the Gospels, nor of S. Paul, nor of S. John; He was not a CHRIST who could claim, as the CHRIST in whom the Church believed could claim, our trust, our worship, our allegiance; He could not claim to reveal the Father. And no one who thus saw what was really involved in the question could say that it was of no moment, or that it was at best a question of abstract theology; rather it touched—it touches now—the very essence of personal religion. For the very essence of personal religion is devotion to the Person of our Divine LORD. If He is not GOD—if His GODHEAD, as in fact S. Paul teaches, was not borne witness to by His Resurrec-



tion—‘then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.’<sup>1</sup>

But if He is God, as the Catholic Church teaches, then we can give to Him all the honour and worship and adoration which it would be idolatry to give to one who was not God; then we can trust Him, absolutely, entirely, unreservedly, in life and in death and through all eternity; then we can and we do behold ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of JESUS CHRIST’;<sup>2</sup> then God is not far off from us, but very near, for it was God Himself, not an inferior deity, who came down to earth and was made Man, and lived and died for us, and rose again, and liveth for ever and ever. It was God Himself—and nothing short of that can ever satisfy our longings, or fill our minds, or command the allegiance of our consciences. It is this which Nicæa has made sure to us.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 14; cf. Rom. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE

#### B. *At the Council of Constantinople.*

Perfect God and Perfect Man : of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.—*Ath. Creed.*

BEFORE we can set ourselves to consider the answer of the second Œcumenical Council to the question : ‘What think ye of CHRIST?’ we must try to follow the course of events which followed the breaking up of the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325. We may divide the period between the two Councils into three great Acts<sup>1</sup>—

*Act 1.* From the apparent victory of the Faith at Nicæa in A.D. 325 till the deaths of Arius in A.D. 336 and of the Emperor Constantine in A.D. 337. This Act is marked throughout by slow but sure increase of Arianism in power and extent.

<sup>1</sup> I owe this and a great deal besides in these four chapters to the lectures of the Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford (Dr. Bright). Where I am conscious that I am quoting his words I have acknowledged it, but there are a great many places, I feel sure, where I only unconsciously plagiarise.

*Act 2.* From the recall of S. Athanasius in A.D. 337 till the supreme apparent collapse of the Orthodox Faith in A.D. 361 after the Council of Ariminum, due in the main to the heresy of the reigning Emperor Constantius and his bitter persecution of the Catholic Church.

*Act 3.* From the Accession of Julian the Apostate in A.D. 361 till the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381; marked by the gradual recovery of the Nicene Faith.

As we have said, the battle between Catholics and Arians in the years which succeeded the First Œcumenical Council raged around the person of S. Athanasius, and round the phrase of the Nicene Creed *ὁμοούσιον*, of one substance (or essence) with the Father.

It will not be out of place to clear the ground by saying something about both these central objects, so to speak, on whom, and on which, so much turned in the history of the events of this time.

(1) S. Athanasius<sup>1</sup> was born at Alexandria in A.D. 296 or 297. Here he was educated, at the centre, as Alexandria then was, of the intellectual activity of the time. A profound insight into Greek philo-

<sup>1</sup> For S. Athanasius see Bright, *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers*, pp. 1-47 and notes, the Article in *Dictionary of Christian Biography* by the same author, and Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, p. 67.

sophical thought, an intimate acquaintance with Roman law, a thorough and exact knowledge of Holy Scripture, above all an overmastering devotion to the Person of our LORD made Athanasius what he was. 'His whole life was interpenetrated by a grasp of the whole bearing of the Incarnation, and by a profound devotion to the Person of CHRIST.'<sup>1</sup>

He was born to rule, so that even Gibbon says of him that 'he was far better qualified than the degenerate sons of Constantine for the government of a great monarchy,'<sup>2</sup> and Dr. Newman's epithet of 'royal-hearted' well expresses his greatness. He was by far the greatest of all the Greek Fathers, great as many of them were: indeed we seem to see in him a supreme example of the influence of Christianity on the national Greek character, elevating and transfiguring its natural gifts, and remedying and supplying its natural defects. In one of his lectures on the Influence of Christianity on National Character Dean Church says of him: 'Greeks saw their own nature and their own gifts elevated, corrected, transformed, glorified, in the heroic devotion of Athanasius, who, to all their familiar qualities of mind, brought a tenacity, a soberness, a height and vastness of aim, an inflexibility of purpose, which they admired the more

<sup>1</sup> Rev. C. Gore.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *Rise and Fall*, iii. 70.



because they were just the powers in which the race failed.’<sup>1</sup>

But it is the life of Athanasius which tells us what he was far more eloquently than any words about him. Even before Nicæa, when hardly more than twenty-one, he had written two of his greatest treatises—the *Contra Gentes* and the *De Incarnatione*; he was present at Nicæa, as we have seen, as the deacon and secretary of Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria,<sup>2</sup> and though he had no vote in the great council he took a leading part in all that was said and done. A few months after the council Alexander died, and at the age of thirty Athanasius ascended the patriarchal throne of Alexandria. For forty-six years he was bishop, and during the whole of that time it is hardly too much to say, as Hooker says, that he was ‘never suffered to enjoy the comfort of a peaceable day.’<sup>3</sup> Again and again he had to flee for his life, five times he was exiled, twice intruders were thrust into his see, constantly he had to answer charges invented by his Arian foes which were perfectly grotesque in their monstrosity,

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Church, *Gifts of Civilisation*, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> The title of Patriarch here used to describe the primate of Egypt is, though convenient, something of an anachronism. See on the Patriarchates, Note D at the end of this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V. xlii. 2.

yet through it all, 'at Rome or at Milan, at Aquileia or at Sardica, at Cæsarea or at Antioch, he is always dignified, self-possessed, completely master of the situation';<sup>1</sup> through it all, in spite of his long absences from Alexandria, he never lost the affection of his people, nor the allegiance of the bishops of Egypt; through it all he was incessantly striving, labouring, pleading, before councils, with the Emperor, in letters and treatises, for that one great Truth which dominated his whole life, the Truth which Nicæa had proclaimed, but which only at such tremendous cost was being made sure to the Church, the Truth that our LORD was what He claimed to be, and what Christian devotion not less than the consciousness of the Church had ever implicitly recognised. He saw the cause, which was far dearer to him than life or ease, at its very lowest ebb when after the Council of Ariminum he stood, as Hooker again puts it, with the whole world against him and he against it, with 'no friend but God and Death, the one a defender of his innocence, the other a finisher of all his troubles.'<sup>2</sup> But God allowed him to see, before Death came, the gradual recovery of the Faith, to see the rise of other leaders,

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *Three Great Fathers*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V. xlii. 5.

especially S. Basil the Great, who should carry on the work when he was gone, to see the reconciliation to the Church, largely through his own sweet reasonableness, of great numbers who had only partially gone astray, and for seven years to govern unmolested the bishoprick and patriarchate from which he had been so often exiled for the Faith.

S. Athanasius died in peace at Alexandria on May 2, A.D. 373.

(2) With S. Athanasius, as the central point of attack, was closely linked the phrase *ὁμοούσιον* in which the great council had been guided to express the truth as to the relation of the Eternal Son to the Eternal Father. The defenders of the Faith saw clearly that no other word but that really expressed the unique relation to One Another of the Blessed Persons of the TRINITY; Arius and his followers saw equally clearly that whatever other expression they might adopt or refuse to adopt, the *ὁμοούσιον* must be rejected if they were to establish their contention that the Son was after all at best but the most exalted of creatures. But though they saw that, they were not agreed as to what term they should adopt in which to give their own answer to the question, 'What think ye of CHRIST?' And after Nicæa

we see in Arianism the tendency which there is in all heresy and schism to split up into parties. The Arian parties are distinguished, sometimes by the names of their chiefs, sometimes by the terms which they used, as against the term *ὁμοούσιον*, to express our LORD's relation to the Father. We may briefly describe the three great parties into which Arianism became sub-divided.<sup>1</sup>

(a) There were, first, those whose leader was Eusebius of Nicomedia, and whose watchword was the term *ὁμοιούσιον*, of *like essence*. These came to be known as Semi-Arians, and it was to the inclusion in that party of many who were little more than verbal in their heresy that one of the causes of the recovery of the true Faith is to be traced.

(b) But, secondly, the Eusebians were beginning to see that their use of terms like *ὁμοιούσιον* was too subtle to be really manageable, and so they gave it up for another phrase which seemed simpler and which might perhaps carry weight with those who did not want to enter into theological subtleties. Our LORD they said was *ὅμοιος τῷ Πατρί*—*like the Father*. This was Homœan Arianism, sometimes called Acacianism, from its leader Acacius of Cæsarea. Their phrase was

<sup>1</sup> See for the phases of Arianism, Newman, *Arians of the Fourth Century*, pp. 335 ff.

accepted by many who did not see that there could be no such thing as a vague answer to the question, 'What think ye of CHRIST?' Either He was GOD, or He was not.

(c) But, thirdly, there were those who did see that; and those who did see it were at least consistent when they said—shocking as their saying was to those who knew they could not trust in a CHRIST whom they might not worship—that He was indeed *ἀνόμοιος τῷ Πατρὶ*, *unlike the Father*. These were the Anomœans or Arians proper; their leaders were Aëtius, a deacon of Antioch, Eunomius Bishop of Cyzicus, Eudoxius Archbishop of Constantinople, and Euzoius of Antioch. They were blasphemous and profane and unscrupulous in the extreme, but they were at least consistent, as none but the Catholics, beside them, were. The Catholic Faith confessed our LORD as very GOD, the Anomœans said He was only a creature, created indeed before all other creatures and the instrument of their creation, yet still a creature; all the other phases and refinements of Arianism were in fact shifts and evasions to get out of saying either, with the Catholic Church, that our LORD was consubstantial with the Father or, with the Anomœans, that He was unlike the Father, not GOD at all.

We have then considered—with a view to clear-

ing the ground—the two great rallying-points, so to call them, of the Catholic Party, their great leader S. Athanasius, and the great watchword of their faith, the term *ὁμοούσιον*.

We may now try to follow the course of events which followed the dispersion of the Nicene Council. It is the record, first of the slow and apparently sure triumph of Arianism, and then, when all seemed lost, of the slow and sure recovery of the Nicene Faith.

It will be impossible to follow the history in any detail; council followed council in quick succession, and each council either drew up its own creed or affirmed or rejected the creed of one of its predecessors; some of these creeds were openly heretical, some were only heretical in what they did *not* say, most of them attempted to conceal the real point at issue by the lofty language which they applied to our LORD, only stopping short at the one word which adequately expressed the Catholic belief. Now one party of Arianism now another was in the ascendant, and dominated in turn the councils which were following each other in quick succession. Behind all was the Emperor, bitterly disappointed that his cherished scheme of a great council had not resulted in unity, caring, as we must think, more for external unity than for the truth, and always prone to be guided and cajoled by



favourites. It was Constantine's weak dependence first on Eusebius of Nicomedia and then on the chiefs of one or another of the Arian parties which was really the cause of the change of his attitude towards the Catholic Faith which had been so favourable at the Council of Nicæa, and it was his change of attitude which was the real reason of the ascendancy of Arianism, under one or other of its phases, during the rest of his reign. Slowly yet really Arianism gained ground from A.D. 325 onwards: in A.D. 336 Constantine ordered Alexander, the aged Patriarch of Constantinople, to receive to communion the heresiarch Arius himself, but on the very day before that which Constantine had fixed for his reception, Arius died very suddenly under circumstances which it is difficult not to regard as miraculous. In the following year Constantine himself, after receiving Baptism at the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia, died in the white baptismal robes on Whitsunday A.D. 337.

Constantine was succeeded by his three sons—Constantine II. in the West, Constantius in the East, and Constans in Italy. Of these Constantine and Constans were Catholics, Constantius an Arian. For a time the two western Emperors were a check on the Arianism of Constantius, but the death of Constantine in A.D. 340 and the murder of Constans

in A.D. 350 left Constantius free, as sole Emperor, to do all he could to crush out the Catholic Faith. And, humanly speaking, he well-nigh succeeded.

It is impossible, as has been said, within the limits of a book of this kind, to follow the history of the many councils, which is in fact the history of the period, during the reigns of Constantine and Constantius ; we can only, as concisely as possible, describe the state of things which existed after the Council of Ariminum in A.D. 359, the council which marks the extreme limit of the Arian ascendancy.

The Acacian party who were in power at Court persuaded the Emperor to have a double council, part in the East and part in the West, each part to send deputies who were to meet in the Emperor's presence and decide upon a formula which each division should sign. The Eastern bishops met at Seleucia in Isauria, the Western at Ariminum in Italy. The formula drawn up by the Emperor's advisers was forced upon the deputies from both divisions of the council, and with it they were sent back to their respective councils : at the Seleucian council the only question was between two parties of Arians, the only Catholic bishops present being the Egyptians and a great Western bishop who happened to be in the East at the time, S. Hilary of Poitiers. But at Ariminum it was a

different matter: the Western bishops had always been Catholic, however unversed most of them were in the subtle distinctions in which the Eastern mind was so much at home: for a long time they refused to sign the formula which their deputies, themselves young and inexperienced men, had brought back, but at last, wearied out by long delays, anxious to return to their dioceses, subjected to constant cajolery and even persecution by the Arians, and deceived into thinking that they could give up the *ὁμοούσιον* without giving up the Nicene Faith, they gave way one by one until only twenty were left. Promises were given to these twenty that certain anathemas should be added, so contrived as to be partly ambiguous and partly plainly anti-Arian; and so persuaded every one of the twenty signed.

The catastrophe was complete.

This was the state of things in the year 361, to which we have now come. The West, in the persons of its bishops, was committed to an Arian Creed: of its three most prominent bishops, Hosius of Cordova who had been present at Nicæa and Liberius of Rome had both signed away their faith, and the third, S. Hilary of Poitiers, was in exile. In the East, the patriarchal thrones of Constantinople Alexandria and Antioch were in the

possession of thorough-going Arians of the Anomæan party; S. Cyril of Jerusalem was in exile; of the two great champions of the Faith at Nicæa, Marcellus of Ancyra had lapsed into Sabellianism so giving colour to the constant taunt of the Arians that the Nicene Faith was really Sabellian in its tendency, and S. Athanasius was in the deserts of Egypt; even the barbarian Goths in the person of their bishop had signed an Arian Creed: whilst the Emperor who had passed from Semi-Arianism to Acacianism was now coming under the sway of the Anomæans. It was this state of things which was described by S. Jerome in the famous words: 'The whole world groaned and marvelled to find itself Arian.'<sup>1</sup>

But it was at this juncture that something happened which suddenly arrested the Arian triumph, and from which we have to date the gradual recovery of the true Faith. In November A.D. 361, at the early age of forty-four, the Emperor Constantius died. In the ordinary course of things he 'might have reigned till orthodoxy, humanly speaking, was extinct.'<sup>2</sup>

We cannot now dwell upon the gradual steps by

<sup>1</sup> 'Ingemuit totus orbis et se Arianum esse miratus est.'—S. Jerome, *Adv. Lucif.*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Note by Dr. Newman in *Select Treatises of S. Athanasius*, p. 127, n.<sup>o</sup> (ed. 1877).

which the Faith of the Consubstantial once more recovered its rightful place in the life and teaching of the Church; we can only enumerate the causes which, once the adverse power of the Emperor was removed, led to that recovery: they were, first, the absence of a continuous anti-Catholic policy in the Emperors who succeeded Constantius—his immediate successor Julian, called the Apostate, was a pagan; after him, for one year only, the Empire was governed by a Catholic, Jovian; Jovian was succeeded by an Arian, Valens, in the East, but the West was governed in succession by two Catholic Emperors, Valentinian and Gratian; and in the year 378 the whole empire was once more re-united under the great Emperor Theodosius, who was a Catholic; secondly, the assent of the bishops to Arian creeds at Ariminum was little more than verbal; thirdly, the laity, as Dr. Newman points out, were very largely loyal to the Nicene faith;<sup>1</sup> fourthly, Semi-Arianism as a party was dying out, being in part absorbed into the Church and in part transferring their heresy with regard to the Divinity of our LORD to heresy of the same nature as to the Divinity of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity; and fifthly, the gradual rise of a strong Catholic party in Cappadocia in the very heart of

<sup>1</sup> Newman, *Arians of the Fourth Century*, Appendix, Note v.

the Arian East under the leadership of S. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Cæsarea.

So it was that when S. Athanasius went to his rest in A.D. 373 the cause for which he had striven and suffered so much was practically won, and though the Arian Valens was still reigning in the East he had not long to reign, and all danger from the civil power, at least as far as Arianism was concerned, was at an end when Theodosius the Great ascended the throne in A.D. 378.

So the Church had answered the question, 'What think ye of CHRIST?' with the emphatic rejoinder—He is truly GOD, co-eternal and co-equal with the Father.

But no sooner had that answer been accepted than at once there arose another, What think ye, then, of His Manhood: granted that He is truly and co-eternally GOD, in what sense is He also Man? It was natural, perhaps, that there should be a reaction: so anxious were some to safeguard the GODHEAD that, to do so, they began to minimise the Manhood. Again we notice the tendency to exaggerate the truth, or at least one aspect of the truth, and to react from one error with such force as to result in error its exact opposite. The heresy which we are now to consider is called Apollinarianism, after its leader Apollinaris of Laodicea.



Apollinarianism, with eyes fixed on the Divine Person of the Redeemer, tried to explain, with a mistaken reverence for His Divinity, how it was that He was also Man, and just as the Arians had ended by making Him not God at all, so Apollinarianism ended by making Him not really Man. This was their explanation: our LORD, they said, had no rational human soul, but in the place of the human soul was the Divine Logos or Word. If so, we see at once, He could not be perfect man, for without a rational soul no man can be perfect; if He were without soul He would not be, as Holy Writ says He is, 'like unto His brethren in all things.'<sup>1</sup> And Apollinarianism did not stop there, even if Apollinaris himself did: it went on to say that our LORD did not truly take flesh of the Blessed Virgin, but that His Body was really a portion of the GODHEAD converted into flesh. It was against these two errors of Apollinarianism that we have the statements in the *Quicumque* that our LORD was 'Perfect God and Perfect Man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting,' and that He was Man 'not by conversion of the GODHEAD into Flesh but by taking of the Manhood into God.' We see what was at stake: the Apollinarian CHRIST was not the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 16.

CHRIST of the Gospels, our perfect example; nor yet the CHRIST of S. Paul, the Second Adam, the true Second Head and Representative of the human race; nor yet the CHRIST of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Great High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are, sin only apart. He could be neither Example nor Second Adam nor High Priest Who was not truly and perfectly Man; nor was that the redemption of our whole nature, which He wrought out, if, when He took upon Him human Nature, He did not take it upon Him in its entirety, if, that is, He took it without the rational soul. This then was at stake in the question of Apollinarianism; and again we are to notice that it was not merely a question of abstract theological truth, but of practical Christian life, for it affected the really practical matters of our LORD'S Example and of the completeness of our Redemption.

Let us give Apollinarianism credit for its real, though misguided, reverence, which shrank from 'such an awful nearness of God to man as was implied in a perfect Incarnation,'<sup>1</sup> and which in its fear of imputing sinful instincts to the Sinless One, erred by denying to Him a perfect human

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *History of the Church from A.D. 313 to A.D. 451*, p. 146.

Nature ; but, whilst we thus give it credit for what it had, do not let us fail to recognise that it is not true reverence to decry that human nature which God created, or to imagine that God could not take unto Himself that human nature which He had created without taking also the sin which we have added to it. Apollinarianism had in it something at least akin to that temper which when our LORD was upon earth could not understand His receiving sinners and eating with them. To turn to the history—

Apollinarianism arose during the lifetime of S. Athanasius, and he showed how entirely free he was from any danger of falling into one error whilst combating another by his letter to Epictetus, Bishop of Corinth, and by two books which he wrote against the errors of Apollinaris ; but the chief defender of the faith as to our LORD's true Manhood was S. Gregory, Bishop of Nazianzus, afterwards Bishop of Constantinople. It was he who presided over the earlier sittings of the Council which the Emperor Theodosius called together to consider amongst other things this Apollinarian heresy ; this was the Second Œcumenical Council. It met at Constantinople in A.D. 381 ; one hundred and fifty bishops were present, all eastern. It illustrates what we have said before that the test of a council's

œcumenicity is not its representative character or its numbers, but its after-acceptance by the Church. Nor in the ancient and undivided Church was there any idea that to be œcumenical a council must be convoked or presided over by the Bishop of Rome. The Second Œcumenical Council was convoked by the Emperor; it was presided over, first by S. Meletius of Antioch, secondly by S. Gregory Nazianzene, and thirdly by Nectarius of Constantinople; none of these was in any sense whatever the representative of Rome, and the first of them, S. Meletius, was actually at the time out of communion with the Roman see. If ever there was a man canonised by popular acclamation it was the 'blessed Saint' who presided over the Second Œcumenical Council, and who died, still out of communion with Rome, whilst the Council was sitting. Even Rome afterwards acknowledged his saintship, and as Father Puller says, 'though the Pope repudiated him and allowed him to be insulted as an Arian during his life, the Roman Church invokes him as a saint now he is dead.'<sup>1</sup> So much for the modern Roman contention that œcumenical councils cannot be summoned without the Pope's authority or at the least his acquiescence; so much

<sup>1</sup> Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 175, 176 (pp. 165, 166, ed. 3); see also pp. 238-253 (pp. 241-353, ed. 3).

for the Roman contention that saintship is impossible outside her communion.<sup>1</sup>

With the doings of the Council of Constantinople we are not concerned except in so far as our immediate subject is affected. Great matters came before it, but its acceptance as œcumenical was the result of its affirmation of the full truth of our LORD's Manhood, its ratification of the work of the Council of Nicæa, and its recension of the Nicene Creed. In this affirmation the Council gave its answer—perhaps we should say its contribution to the answer—to the question, 'What think ye of CHRIST?' Its answer was given by its condemnation of Apollinarianism, and by its emphasis on the perfect Manhood of the LORD by its insertion into the Creed of the words 'of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary' after the word 'incarnate,' and of the words 'was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate.' It also, as against the Macedonian heresy which denied the GODHEAD of the Holy Ghost, declared Him to be 'the LORD and Life-Giver,' and added to the Creed almost all that follows the words 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the 'Antiochene Schism,' which was the cause of the division between S. Meletius and the West, see Note E at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> For a comparison of the Nicene and Constantinopolitan recensions of the Creed, see Note F at the end of this volume.

So, first at Nicæa and then at Constantinople, the Church affirmed the truth as to our Lord's Person on the two sides on which it had been attacked — first, He is Very God; second, He is perfect Man. In the history of the heresies which follow and of the way in which they were met we shall see how, given those two statements, they are to be reconciled with the third which the Catholic Church holds with equal tenacity—

‘Who although He be God and Man· yet He is not two but One CHRIST’



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE

#### *c. At the Council of Ephesus.*

When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man :  
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's Womb.—*Te Deum.*

Who although He be God and Man : yet He is **not**  
**Two** but **One** CHRIST.—*Ath. Creed.*

WE have seen how the first two Œcumenical Councils made answer to the question, 'What think ye of CHRIST?' Nicæa declared Him to be very GOD, Constantinople declared Him to be perfect Man. In the history of the heresies which follow, and of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon at which they were condemned, we shall see how, given these two statements, they are to be reconciled with the third which the Catholic Church has ever held with equal tenacity, 'Who although He be God and Man : yet He is not two but One CHRIST.'

The union of GODHEAD and Manhood in the One

Person of our LORD must ever be a great mystery : it is a union which is perfectly unique, and as such it must be beyond our comprehension. It is unique, because, though it is true to say that God dwells in the Saints as in a tabernacle, yet the indwelling of the Eternal Son in Man is something more than such indwelling, it is personal union of the closest kind.<sup>1</sup> The Church believes and teaches that the Eternal Son took up into Himself a perfect human nature so as to redeem not merely *a* man but Man. And if so it follows that He did not take a human personality, for had He done so there would have been two Persons—the Person of the Eternal Word and the Person of the Son of Mary—allied together but not indivisibly united. The Eternal Son took human nature, perfect in all that makes human nature, without taking a human personality.

Let us ask ourselves two questions :

First, What is personality ? It is that which I share with no one else ; it is that which individualises me ; it is that in which my own being centres and no one else's ; it is that which makes me a person and separates me off from the race.

<sup>1</sup> ' And that a higher gift than grace  
Should flesh and blood refine,  
GOD's Presence and His Very Self  
And Essence all-Divine.'

Newman, *Dream of Gerontius*.

Secondly, What, on the other hand, is human nature? It is that which I share with the whole race; it is that which makes me, not myself but man, one of many; it is that which existing first in Adam was transmitted to all his descendants.

So then nature unites, personality separates.

Some words of Canon MacColl in his *Christianity in relation to Science and Morals* may here be quoted. ‘What was it that Adam transmitted to his descendants? Not his personality, for that was incommunicable. No human being can part with his personality or share it with another. We read that Adam begat sons and daughters—that is to say, that he passed on to his offspring his own nature in its fulness: but his personality remained exclusively his own for ever, and his descendants had each their own personalities. Thus we see that human nature is transmissible, but not human personality. In the case of every man and woman the nature derived from Adam is developed round a new personal centre. We are all one through our unity of race—that unity of nature which we have in common as children of Adam. On the other hand, we are all separate individuals through our possession of that sovereign principle of action in the soul to which we give the name of personality. Get that distinction clearly into your

minds. By natural descent from Adam each of us possesses the integral essence of humanity; but this humanity is organised in every individual on a new personality not derived from Adam. Now what happened in the case of our LORD when He took human nature was this. In order to cut off the entail of that tainted nature which we all derive by our conception and birth from our first parents, the germ of humanity which was derived from Adam through the Virgin Mary was vitalized, without the intervention of man, by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, "the LORD and giver of life"; and instead of being like ours centred in a new human personality, it was taken up into the Personality of the Eternal Word, the Second Person in the Blessed TRINITY.<sup>1</sup>

We have dwelt thus far upon what is meant by Personality in order that we may understand better what was involved in the heresy which the Church had next to combat. Bearing in mind what has just been said, that nature unites us with the rest of the human race whilst personality separates from it, we see at once the importance of the belief that our LORD took human nature in its entirety, but not a human personality or self, or, to put it in very few words, that He was made Man, not *a* man.

<sup>1</sup> MacColl, *Christianity in relation to Science and Morals*, p. 125.

So while we hold that He had from the moment of His Conception in the womb of His Blessed Mother two whole and perfect Natures, the GODHEAD and the Manhood, we do not hold that He became two Persons. Though He had two natures, His Being centred, if we may so speak, in the One Self or Person—the Divine Person of the Eternal Son, and in that Person the two Natures were united never to be divided.

Let us carry our thoughts back for one moment to the heresy which we were last considering—the heresy of Apollinaris. He had so exaggerated the truth that our LORD was One not two, that he had denied the perfection of the human nature and had made it consist of a human body and a lower human soul without a rational human soul, the place of which was supplied by the Divine Logos. This, we see, besides marring true Manhood, involved confusion, not union, of the Natures. And so of course there came the reaction. The heresy which we are now to consider—it is called Nestorianism—reacted violently from Apollinarianism and made such a separation between our LORD's two Natures as to make Him two Persons, the Son of Mary one Person, the Son of God another, with alliance between them but no real union; that is to say, according to Nestorius, God

was not really made Man, but GOD the Eternal Son allied Himself, His Divine Personality, with the personality of Mary's Son in a way which differed only in degree, not in kind, from GOD's alliance with those who walk with Him and please Him. JESUS the Son of Mary was the Man, of all others, in whom the Eternal Word was pleased to dwell as in a tabernacle, and whom He used as a garment. But that was not all: if it was His super-eminent holiness which fitted the Son of Mary to be in so special a sense the Temple of the Divine Word, then it follows that we must arbitrarily fix some period during His earthly life as the point at which the Eternal Word allied Himself with the Holy Son of Mary. Earlier heretics had in fact said that the Word descended upon the Man JESUS at His Baptism and left Him before His Crucifixion—so that before His Baptism and after His Crucifixion JESUS was not really GOD. Nestorius, though he did not say this, held a doctrine which was in fact indistinguishable from it—the whole point being that according to him GOD was not really Incarnate, and there was no real union between the GODHEAD and the Manhood. It was not, as Dr. Bright says, 'GOD really Incarnate, it was a man morally deified.'<sup>1</sup>

As in Arianism the strife raged round the one

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *Notes on the Canons of the First Four General Councils*, p. 65.



word which the defenders of the Faith saw was the only word which really safeguarded the truth attacked, so in Nestorianism it was one pregnant Greek word which became the centre of the whole dispute. It was the word Θεοτόκος, of which the nearest and only available English translation is 'Mother of God.'<sup>1</sup> It was a word which had to be explained, it is true—again and again the defenders of the Faith had to explain that by it they did not mean to affirm that Mary was the mother of the GODHEAD, but that so close was the union between the GODHEAD and the Manhood in the One Person of Him Who was made Man that it was impossible to divide them or to think of them apart, and that therefore if that Holy Thing which was born of a human mother, miraculously, was both God and Man, she who bore Him must be called Mother of God. It might be said that the term does not occur in Holy Scripture, any more than the term ὁμοούσιον does, but it was useless to use Scriptural terms when every one twisted them into the meaning he wanted them to bear; it was necessary to employ some term which could not be twisted and could therefore be used as a real test. At the same time, though the word Θεοτόκος does not occur in Holy Scripture, the principle implied

<sup>1</sup> On 'Mother of God' as a translation of Θεοτόκος, see Note G at the end of this volume.

in it is most certainly Scriptural—that principle being the inseparable Union of God and Man in the One Person of Him Who became Incarnate for our sakes, a union so intimate and essential that the qualities and attributes of each Nature can be predicated of Him Who possesses both. ‘Scripture predicates,’ says Dr. Bright, ‘what is human of God, what is Divine of Man.’<sup>1</sup> So intimate was the union of the two Natures in CHRIST’s One Person that we find Him saying of Himself ‘the Son of Man which is in heaven,’<sup>2</sup> thus predicating what is Divine of Man; while on the other hand S. Paul can speak of ‘the Church of God which He purchased with His Blood,’<sup>3</sup> and ‘the Crucifixion of the LORD of Glory,’<sup>4</sup> thus predicating what is human of God. If therefore Holy Scripture can speak of the Blood of God and the Crucifixion of God, it cannot be wrong to speak of the Mother of God—if Holy Scripture can speak of God dying, it cannot be wrong to speak of God being born. Why? Simply because CHRIST is One not Two, so that, if only we are careful to explain that we do not mean the blood, or the crucifixion, or the birth, of the impassible GODHEAD, but the blood and crucifixion and birth of that One Person Who

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *Select Sermons of S. Leo the Great on the Incarnation*, p. 130 (ed. 2). This is called by theologians ‘communicatio idiomatum.’ See Note H at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> S. John iii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xx. 28.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 8.

is both God and Man indivisibly, we are thereby affirming the truth of the One Personality and the reality of the Incarnation, as we can affirm it in no other way. What Nestorius really shrank from was the most awful yet most blessed Mystery of the Incarnation, from the tremendous words of the Archangel, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'<sup>1</sup>

And so shrinking from the Mystery he in fact emptied the Incarnation of all its meaning: He Who was born of Mary was a man and nothing more; therefore Mary can in no sense be called the Mother of God. The repudiation of the title must necessarily follow from his doctrine of a mere alliance or association such as there is between God and the Saints; and, *vice versâ*, the doctrine of a mere alliance must follow from the repudiation of the title Θεοτόκος. If Mary was not Mother of God, then that Holy Thing which was born of her was not God from the moment of His Conception, and if He was not God from that moment, it follows that we must arbitrarily fix some time of His life when the GODHEAD was conjoined with the Manhood, instead of accepting the implicit Faith of the Church, which the Third Œcumenical Council made

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke i. 35.

explicit, that GOD really took flesh and became Man in the womb of His Blessed Mother of her substance, and that from the very moment of His Conception ‘two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the GODHEAD and Manhood, were joined together in One Person, never to be divided, whereof is One CHRIST, Very God and Very Man.’<sup>1</sup>

We have perhaps said enough to show why it was that the Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries defended and fought for the title ‘Mother of God.’ It was not, be it remarked, out of a desire to honour her, whose honour is above the honour of every human creature, that they bestowed upon her that unique and unapproachable title; it was simply and solely because they perceived that it guarded, as no other term exactly guarded, the truth of the Personal Unity of the GODHEAD and the Manhood and the reality of the Incarnation.

We may now turn to the history.

Exactly fifty years elapsed between the Second and the Third Œcumenical Councils, years of intense interest to the student of Church History: space would fail us to tell of S. Augustine and S. Ambrose, S. Jerome and S. Chrysostom, S. Basil and S. Gregory, S. Martin and S. German, yet all these lived and worked and died during these fifty years. We must confine our attention to the events which

<sup>1</sup> XXXIX Articles, Art. II.

preceded the Third Œcumenical Council only in so far as they concern the history of Nestorianism.

It must be said that the heresy afterwards called by the name of Nestorius arose many years before his time; it was in fact, as we have said, an immediate and violent reaction against the heresy of Apollinaris which was condemned in A.D. 381. The leaders of this reaction and the real founders of the Nestorian heresy were Diodore Bishop of Tarsus, and Theodore Bishop of Mopsuestia. Theodore was the real formulator of Nestorianism, and Nestorius, as Dr. Bright says, 'is simply, for theological purposes, a faint shadow of Theodore.'<sup>1</sup> Yet, partly from his eminent position as Patriarch of Constantinople, partly from the fact that it was he with whom the heresy came to be specially identified at the time of its condemnation, it has come to be known as Nestorianism after his name.

As the *ὁμοούσιον* had found its great champion in S. Athanasius so now the *Θεοτόκος* found its great champion, and Nestorianism its great opponent, in S. Cyril of Alexandria: it is surely noticeable how when the Faith is attacked God raises up a champion to defend it; when Goliath rages against God's people David is at hand with his sling and stone.

We cannot, alas, speak of S. Cyril as we have

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *Waymarks in Church History*, p. 131.

spoken of S. Athanasius, though we must be very slow to indorse all that modern writers have said against him; the great writer of 'Hypatia,' for instance, has certainly been unjust to his memory and has lent too ready an ear to pagan accusations. Cyril's faults were due to an imperious and hasty temper, and also to the circumstances of his episcopate, which put into his hands tremendous secular powers to which he was unequal and which he wielded with a vigour and an energy which sometimes forgot that the cause of God and of righteousness does not excuse, still less sanctify, the use of worldly weapons in its defence. Cyril's violence and hastiness often led him into a rashness of statement and of action which he must afterwards have regretted, and which he frequently had to explain, but even so he is not to be held entirely or directly responsible for all the violence of which he has been accused, a great deal of which, especially the terrible tragedy of the murder of Hypatia, is very far from being proved against him.

On the other hand there is a great deal in his character which we can admire and love; there is his unswerving devotion to the cause of what he believed, and of what we believe, to be the truth; there is his readiness to explain when he had been, not indeed without reason, misunderstood; there is



what has been called 'his high courage and his majestic force of character'; there is, above all, what the same writer has described as 'his firm grasp of the Christian ideas of mediation and atonement and that deep religious sense of the marvellous love of God as manifested in the Incarnation which was . . . a sustaining motive of his polemical energy.'<sup>1</sup>

S. Cyril became Archbishop of Alexandria in A.D. 412: Nestorius became Archbishop of Constantinople in A.D. 428.

The contest between them began by a series of letters. In A.D. 429 S. Cyril wrote a letter to some monks in which he argued that 'if it is true that He Who was born of the Virgin was God, then how shall she who bore Him be not Mother of God?' This letter, appearing in Constantinople, gave violent offence to Nestorius, who caused a letter to be written against it. Then, in the early part of A.D. 430, S. Cyril wrote two Epistles to Nestorius, the second of which is reckoned as the First Œcumenical Epistle of S. Cyril.<sup>2</sup> Nestorius

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *Waymarks in Church History*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> We should say in passing that writings become œcumenical, and as such binding on the whole Church, in the same way that the canons of councils do, namely, by their acceptance by councils which themselves are œcumenical by reason of their acceptance by the whole Church.



answered, and then, at the end of A.D. 430, S. Cyril wrote his Second Œcumenical Epistle: to this letter are appended what are called the Twelve Anathemas or Chapters, which were afterwards fruitful in trouble to the Church, and which S. Cyril had to explain again and again: in them he uses somewhat one-sided language, and language which, taken by itself but only so taken, might seem to imply error in an opposite direction to that in question. The second letter is particularly interesting owing to the use which S. Cyril makes in it of the doctrine of the Eucharist as a parallel to the doctrine of the Incarnation. When we say in the Eucharist that we partake of the Flesh of Him who is both GOD and Man we no more mean that we partake of the GODHEAD, than when we speak of Mary as Mother of GOD we mean that she was Mother of the GODHEAD. The Flesh of CHRIST of which He bids us partake, could of itself, as He Himself has taught us, 'profit nothing' unless it were conjoined with His Divine Nature, so too it is the conjunction of the Divine Nature with the human in the Womb of the Virgin which makes the Incarnation what it is, of such 'infinite worth' for the purpose of man's redemption.

Meanwhile the matter in question had come to the knowledge of Celestine Bishop of Rome, and

in this Second Œcumenical Epistle, S. Cyril joins Celestine's authority with his own, and bids Nestorius choose either to lay aside his heresy within ten days or to be separated from the communion of himself and Celestine.

In A.D. 431, at Whitsuntide, the Emperor Theodosius II. convoked the Council of Ephesus. The Bishop of Rome was represented by two bishops and a priest; Africa was only represented by the deacon of the Archbishop of Carthage, the invitation to S. Augustine having arrived just after his death; the bishops of the Patriarchate of Antioch were not present, S. Cyril refusing to wait for them. Candidian, a layman, the Emperor's representative, had a kind of external presidency of the Council, but S. Cyril was the real president; one hundred and fifty-eight bishops were present. We cannot describe in detail all that took place in the various sessions of the Council: what concerns us is that it condemned and deposed Nestorius, and accepted the Letters of Cyril as expressing the true doctrine, and as agreeable to the Faith which had already been expressed in the Creed of Nicæa.

After the Council, Cyril was reconciled to John of Antioch, who had taken exception to the Anathemas, and whom Cyril had treated, it must be said, with scant courtesy in his refusal to await

his arrival before opening the Council. Cyril explained the Anathemas, and John, on his side, condemned Nestorius. Cyril then wrote his Epistle to John of Antioch which, through its acceptance at the next Œcumenical Council, is now reckoned as the Third Œcumenical Letter.

So the Church once more expressed her mind, declaring at Ephesus that although at Nicæa she had confessed our LORD to be Very God, and at Constantinople to be Perfect Man, yet He is not Two but One CHRIST.

Once again let us ask ourselves what was at stake, what it is for which we have to thank the Fathers of Ephesus, what it would have meant for us if Nestorius had been adjudged to be right, and S. Cyril to be wrong.

And, first of all, we must again repeat that it was not the honour and dignity of the Ever Blessed Mother of our LORD which was in question, but the very truth as to the Person of her Divine and Adorable Son. Cyril neither conceived himself to be defending, nor Nestorius to be attacking, her honour but His. It is quite true that the title Θεοτόκος, Mother of God, does express her unique and unapproachable dignity, but it is not as such that we can either accept or repudiate it. It is a title which especially in its English form needs to

be explained, but we may not give it up, or allow others to give it up, merely because we think it too exalted a title to be given even to her whom all generations have called Blessed. Something far greater and higher than even her honour is at stake in the use or rejection of the term Θεοτόκος—nothing less indeed than the truth and reality of the Incarnation.

If Cyril was wrong and Nestorius right, if That which Mary brought forth was only a man, and if God instead of taking up into Himself human nature merely allied Himself with a man, albeit the holiest of men, then there was no real redemption wrought, no real atonement made, no real mediation offered. For, that which was redeemed was *a* man, not Man, not humanity, not the human race; that atonement was not a making-at-one again of God and Adam's sinful race, but only of God and that man in whom He was pleased to dwell; that mediation was emptied of all its meaning, for that could be no true Mediator Who could not lay His hand upon both, not being in any true sense Himself both God and Man.

If there was no real personal union between the GODHEAD and the Manhood, if, as Nestorius is reported to have said, he could never acknowledge a child of two or three months old to be God, then

God did abhor the Virgin's Womb, God did shrink from taking upon Himself our human nature; and, if so, the adoration of the Magi and of the shepherds was nothing less than idolatry. It has all been a great mistake—the Christmas Message is nothing; the Manger and the Swaddling Clothes imply no condescension, no stooping down of God from earth to heaven; the Child in the Mother's arms has no meaning for us.

This then was at stake in the controversy which we have been considering—nothing less than the truth and reality of the Incarnation, and, as depending upon the Incarnation, the truth and reality of the Sacraments. And, on the other hand, this was made sure to us by the Faith which found expression at the Council of Ephesus—the reality of Atonement, Redemption, and Mediation for the whole race; the undoing of the work of the Fall by the Child-bearing of her who has changed the curse which Eve brought upon womanhood into a blessing; the purification and sanctification of human life and all that pertains to it, birth and childhood and manhood and death, by Him Who steeped 'in the glory of His Divine Personality all of human that He wrought.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Trench, quoted by Bright, *History of the Church from A.D. 313 to A.D. 451*, p. 340.

This was made sure to us: and now we can say, as else we could not have said, that we believe in Him, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; He, the SELF-SAME, for us men and for our salvation coming down from heaven, incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, made Man; He, the SELF-SAME, God from all eternity, Man for evermore.

Now we can praise Him—Thou, the King of Glory: Thou, the Everlasting Son: Thou, Who now sittest at the Right Hand of the Father from whence Thou shalt come to be our Judge: Thou, the SELF-SAME and no other, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's Womb.

Now we can sing, as else we could not sing, in our Christmas hymns:

'CHRIST by highest heaven adored,  
CHRIST the Everlasting LORD,  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a Virgin's Womb.  
Veiled in flesh the GODHEAD see!  
Hail the Incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,  
JESUS our Emmanuel.'<sup>1</sup>

This and nothing less than this do we owe to S. Cyril and the Third Œcumenical Council.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Wesley.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE GRADUAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE

#### *D. At the Council of Chalcedon.*

One Altogether, not by confusion of substance but  
by unity of Person.—*Ath. Creed.*

LET us recall the contributions which the first Three Œcumenical Councils made to the momentous question propounded to them, ‘What think ye of CHRIST?’

The Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325 answered, He is Very God; the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 answered, He is Perfect Man; the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431 said, Although He be God and Man, yet He is not two but one CHRIST.

There remained yet another question which immediately arose for settlement, If One, how One? If two whole and perfect Natures are, as you say, indivisibly united in the One Divine Person, how are they so united? Before the Church answered

that question at the Fourth Œcumenical Council, we have once more to consider the way in which heresy exaggerated one aspect of the truth and reacted from some other error. Heresy, as we have before observed, is ever the result of a too violent reaction from the heresy which it is seeking to combat, or else of a one-sided exaggeration of some aspect of the truth. The error from which Eutychianism — which we are now to consider — reacted was the ultra-separation of the two Natures by Nestorius which had in fact made our LORD two Persons; the aspect of the truth which it exaggerated was that which declared our LORD to be One CHRIST not two.

Let us safeguard the unity, Eutyches said, by denying that after the Incarnation there are any longer two natures; let us say that the Manhood is swallowed up in the GODHEAD. Thus for union Eutychianism substituted confusion; it exaggerated the truth, which Ephesus had declared, of a union of natures in the One Person into a confusion of natures. It was thus an exaggeration; and it was also a reaction; Nestorius taught a real severance, Eutyches went to the other extreme and taught what was really confusion. Between the two, the Church insisted on the union of the two Natures, as opposed on the one hand to the mere alliance or

association which Nestorius taught, and which was really severance, and as opposed, on the other hand, to that confusion of natures which was the outcome of the Eutychian theory that the Manhood of our LORD was swallowed up in the GODHEAD 'as a drop of honey is swallowed up in the ocean,' as it was expressed by some. Nestorius held that the two Natures were so separate and distinct as to be in fact two Persons; Eutyches held that the two Natures were so commingled and interwoven as that in fact our LORD was not merely One Person but that He had after the Incarnation but one Nature. Against both, the Catholic Church insisted upon the truth that our LORD is One Person in two Natures, that the Manhood was taken up into the GODHEAD and that whilst there was real union between them there was no confusion. Stress had to be laid on the preposition 'in,' *in* two Natures, because Eutyches endeavoured to avoid the point at issue by expressing his willingness to say that our LORD was '*of* two Natures.' By that he simply meant that the two Natures existed apart, in the abstract, before the Incarnation, which was a mere truism, but he would not say that our LORD was One Person *in* two Natures because that implied distinction as well as union; that He was '*of* two Natures' did not necessarily mean that He continued

to be such, whilst 'in two Natures' did. Here again then, as in Apollinarianism, we see that the perfection of our LORD'S Manhood was in question, and with it the reality of His Human Example and of His High Priesthood, and of His claim to be the Second Adam.

The chief opponent of Eutychianism was S. Leo the Great, who became Bishop of Rome in A.D. 440. S. Leo was great not only as an ecclesiastic, but as a statesman: it was he who, aided by the circumstances of the Empire at the time, was the real founder of the Papacy as it afterwards became, but it is not as such that we have to do with him now. It is rather with him as the great theologian whose writings did so much to secure the triumph of the Faith against the new trouble which had arisen out of the reaction against Nestorianism, and also, it must be confessed, out of the exaggerated language which had been used by those who had withstood Nestorius, among them even by S. Cyril himself. The most important of S. Leo's writings against Eutychianism, though very far from the only one, is his Twenty-eighth Epistle, known as the Tome of S. Leo: the exact place of the Tome in the history of the controversy we shall consider presently, we will only here try to indicate the lines on which S. Leo seeks to oppose the heresy of Eutyches and

to defend the truth which Eutyches denied. Let us notice, first of all, the way in which he keeps ‘the proportion of the Faith,’<sup>1</sup> never in opposing the denial of our LORD’s Perfect Manhood forgetting that He is truly Divine ; then let us notice the grasp which he has upon the real issue of the question, the question, he sees, of our redemption and salvation and nothing short of it ; and let us notice the concise and vigorous and epigrammatic style which marks the Latin of S. Leo’s sermons and letters. His great argument is that our LORD, as He is set forth to us in the Gospels, is plainly portrayed as existing in two natures or spheres of operation and that there is none of that confusion of natures which the theory of Eutyches involved. Nothing can better describe S. Leo’s argument than to quote his own words in the Twenty-eighth Epistle :<sup>2</sup>

‘While the distinctness of both Natures and Substances is preserved and both met in one Person, lowliness is assumed by Majesty, weakness by power, mortality by Eternity ; and in order to pay the debt of our condition the inviolable Nature has been united to the passible, so that, as the appropriate remedy for our ills, one and the same “Mediator between God and Man, the Man CHRIST

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> S. Leo, *Ep.* xxviii., § 3—translated by Bright, *Select Sermons of S. Leo the Great on the Incarnation*, p. 113 (ed. 2).

JESUS" might from one element be capable of dying, and from the other be incapable. Therefore in the entire and perfect nature of very man was born very God, whole in what was His, whole in what was ours. By "ours" we mean what the Creator formed in us at the beginning, and what He assumed in order to restore; for of that which the deceiver brought in, and man thus deceived admitted, there was not a trace in the Saviour; and the fact that He took on Himself a share in our infirmities did not make Him a partaker in our transgressions. He took on Him "the form of a servant" without the defilement of sin, augmenting what was human, not diminishing what was divine.'

There are few passages in theological writing which illustrate better the keeping of 'the proportion of the Faith'<sup>1</sup> to which S. Paul exhorts us; though it was written to oppose Eutychianism, it is of equal value against Nestorianism, and we notice how the constructive method of a simple statement of the truth is in itself the best way of meeting and controverting error. Further on in the letter S. Leo illustrates from Holy Scripture what he means by the preservation of 'the distinctness of both natures,' confuting the error of Eutyches that, after the Incarnation, our LORD had but one

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 6.



nature. It was One and the Self-Same Who as Man was wrapped in the swaddling clothes, and, as God, was praised by the voices of the angels; Whose life, as Man, was sought by Herod, and Who as God was adored by the Magi; Who, as Man, came to the Baptism of John, and to Whom, as God, the Voice of the Eternal Father witnessed; Who, as Man, was tempted by the Devil, and to Whom, as God, angels minister. 'To hunger, to thirst, to be weary, and to sleep, is evidently human. But to feed five thousand men with five loaves and to bestow on the woman of Samaria that living water . . . to walk on the surface of the sea with feet that sink not, and by rebuking the storm to bring down the uplifted waves, is unquestionably Divine. As then—to pass by many points—it does not belong to the same nature to weep with feelings of pity over a dead friend, and, after the mass of stone had been removed from the grave where he had lain four days, by a voice of command to raise him up to life again; or to hang on the wood, and to make all the elements tremble after daylight had been turned into night; or to be transfixed with nails, and to open the gates of Paradise to the faith of the Robber; so it does not belong to the same nature to say, "I and the Father are One," and to say, "the Father is greater than I." For although in the LORD

JESUS CHRIST there is One Person of God and Man, yet that whereby contumely attaches to both is one thing, and that whereby glory attaches to both is another: for from what belongs to us He has that Manhood which is inferior to the Father; while from the Father He has equal GODHEAD with the Father.<sup>1</sup>

Thus our LORD is set forth to us as One and the Self-same Person as against Nestorius, yet existing after the Incarnation in two Natures or spheres of operation, as against Eutyches.

We may now turn to the history.

After the Council of Ephesus, as we saw in the last chapter, S. Cyril was reconciled to John of Antioch who had taken exception, not altogether without reason, to the somewhat one-sided language of the Twelve Chapters or Anathemas appended to S. Cyril's second letter: S. Cyril explained the Anathemas and John condemned Nestorius. But controversy was not at an end, and again and again in their extreme dread of Nestorianism there was danger among those who opposed it of the opposite error. Many who thought that they were following S. Cyril and who sheltered themselves under his great name were perilously near to forgetting, if not denying, our LORD's Perfect Manhood, and it was not long before the ultra-orthodoxy, so to call

<sup>1</sup> S. Leo, *Ep.* xxviii. 4, translated by Bright, *op. cit.*, pp. 116, 117

it, of a great many passed into heresy. S. Cyril died in A.D. 444; he was succeeded by his Archdeacon Dioscorus, a bad and unscrupulous and violent man; in A.D. 447 Flavian became Archbishop of Constantinople and almost at once was called upon to deal with the question now agitating the Church. Eutyches was an old Abbot who ruled over a monastery just outside Constantinople; a man of reverent temper and of no great learning he had been led to oppose with great persistency the irreverent opinions of the Nestorianisers; like Apollinaris he shrank from what seemed to him the too great condescension implied in the Incarnation and so like him was led so to minimise as in fact to explain away the reality of our LORD's Manhood. The Archbishop, Flavian, had perforce to examine Eutyches as to his opinions, and he was summoned before a small council of bishops assembled in Flavian's house; it was some time before he would attend and when at last he came nothing would induce him to admit that our LORD had two Natures after the Incarnation. Eutyches had a mistaken reverence and a real and honest desire to oppose Nestorianism, but he entirely failed to see what the practical denial of our LORD's Manhood meant, and Flavian could do nothing but condemn and excommunicate him. Dioscorus of Alexandria

violently took up the cause of the condemned Abbot and began to work for a general council to reverse Flavian's decision. Meanwhile the Bishop of Rome, S. Leo, who at first had seemed inclined to support Eutyches, wrote his famous Twenty-eighth Epistle, dated June 13, A.D. 449 and addressed to Flavian of Constantinople. On August the 1st, the Emperor Theodosius II. convoked the Second Council of Ephesus which met in the Church of S. Mary where the Council of A.D. 431 had met. Dioscorus presided; the Bishop of Rome was represented by a bishop and a deacon; one hundred and thirty bishops were present; Eutyches appeared before the Council, but it was really a trial of Flavian. A fearful scene ensued; the party of Dioscorus dominated the Council and raged and screamed against Flavian and those who held with him; bishop after bishop, terrorised into submission, gave way; again and again the deputies of S. Leo tried to get the Twenty-eighth Epistle read, again and again this was refused; at last Dioscorus called in the soldiery, and with the soldiers came bands of infuriated monks; the Archbishop of Constantinople was so trampled on that he died soon after; and by the evening of that awful day every bishop present had been made to sign a blank paper on which Dioscorus had determined to record the deposition

of Flavian and the acquittal of Eutyches; only the deacon of the Bishop of Rome escaped from the Council without consenting to its proceedings. Thus ended that shameful gathering which has come down to posterity by the name given to it in a subsequent letter of S. Leo—the Latrocinium or Robbers' Council of A.D. 449. Two years later the Emperor Marcian summoned the Council which was to take its rank as the Fourth Œcumenical Council of the Church: it met at Chalcedon on the eighth day of October A.D. 451. Six hundred and thirty bishops were present, and, 'for the first time in the history of the Church, the legates of the Pope presided at an Œcumenical Council.'<sup>1</sup> The Council of Chalcedon condemned and deposed Dioscorus of Alexandria, received the three letters of S. Cyril and the 'Tome' of S. Leo, drew up a definition of the Faith as to our LORD'S Person, and passed thirty canons. The 'Chalcedonian Definition' as it is called acknowledges 'our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Same perfect in GODHEAD, and the Same perfect in Manhood, truly GOD and truly Man, the Same, of a reasonable soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as to the GODHEAD, and the Same consubstantial with us as

<sup>1</sup> Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, p. 268 (p. 376, ed. 3).

to the Manhood; in all things like unto us apart from sin; Who was begotten of the Father before ages as to the GODHEAD, but at the end of days, the Self-Same, for us and for our salvation, (born) of Mary the Virgin, the Mother of GOD, as to the Manhood; one and the same CHRIST, Son, LORD, Only-begotten, acknowledged as in two natures without confusion, change, division, or separation. . . .’

So the last great answer was given, and the Fourth Œcumenical Council declared, not less against Nestorius than against Eutyches, that our LORD is One Divine Person in two Natures, very GOD and very Man. Let us again remind ourselves, for we cannot do it too often, that the right Faith as to the Person of our Redeemer touches not merely Theology but our own personal religious life. Eutychianism, like Apollinarianism, really imperilled all that follows from the truth that our LORD was made like unto us in all things sin only except—imperilled, that is, the reality of His claim to be the Second Adam and the Great High Priest and the perfect Example. It is needless to repeat what was said in speaking of the heresy of Apollinaris.

Having thus considered in order the work of these four great councils, we may conclude by



trying to summarise what they have done for the Church, and the lessons which stand out from a study of the history of this period.

We cannot do better than quote the words of Richard Hooker if we want a clear summary of the work of the councils so far as they are concerned with the doctrine of our LORD'S Person. He concludes the fifty-fourth chapter of the fifth book of his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* with these words: 'To gather therefore into one sum all that hitherto hath been spoken touching this point, there are but four things which concur to make complete the whole state of our LORD JESUS CHRIST: His Deity, His Manhood, the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other being joined in one. Four principal heresies there are which have in those things withstood the truth: Arians by bending themselves against the Deity of CHRIST; Apollinarians by maiming and misinterpreting that which belongeth to His human nature; Nestorians by rending Christ asunder, and dividing Him into two persons; the followers of Eutyches by confounding in His Person those natures which they should distinguish. Against these there have been four most famous ancient general councils: the council of Nice to define against Arians, against Apollinarians the council of Constantinople, the



council of Ephesus against Nestorians, against Eutychians the Chalcedon council. In four words, ἀληθῶς, τελῶς, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀσυγχύτως, *truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly*; the first applied to His being God, and the second to His being man, the third to His being of both One, and the fourth to His still continuing in that One both: we may fully by way of abridgement comprise whatsoever antiquity hath at large handled, either in declaration of Christian belief, or in refutation of the foresaid heresies: Within the compass of which four heads I may truly affirm, that all heresies which touch but the Person of JESUS CHRIST, whether they have risen in these later days, or in any age heretofore, may be with great facility brought to confine themselves.'

We notice, then, the completeness of the work of the Four Councils in this respect. Two other Councils which have been accepted as œcumenical were concerned with the doctrine of our LORD'S Person, the Second Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553, which only confirmed the decrees of Ephesus and Chalcedon, and the Third of Constantinople in A.D. 680, which dealt with a refinement of the Eutychian heresy; they do not therefore really detract from the truth of Hooker's statement as to the completeness of the

work of the Four Councils which we have been studying.

The Period of the Councils is fruitful in great and abiding lessons .

1. It is in the gradual completion of the witness of the Councils to the Church's Faith that we may find our first lesson. That witness was not given all at once, it was not given without infinite pains and trouble. And so it is a warning to us, as we have remarked before, not to expect any 'short cut' to the fulness of belief; it is an indication of God's Will that it may oftentimes have to be 'through much tribulation' that we must pass to our heritage of the Catholic Faith, nay more that we may even have great difficulty in finding out what the Faith is. If it be so, do not let it surprise us: if it was only at such tremendous cost that the Fathers of the Ancient and Undivided Church found out what was the mind of the Church on so fundamental a doctrine as that of our LORD's Person, if even the Apostles themselves were so long left in doubt as to His Divinity, ought we to wonder or complain if sometimes it is not so easy for us to arrive at the truth on other matters about which we fain would know it?

And yet, though the Church only gradually arrived at the expression of the truth, at last she

did arrive at it: that same Holy SPIRIT Who spake by the Prophets, Who inspired the Evangelists, Who abode in the Church as in His Temple, when the time was come gave utterance to the mind of the Church through the lips of the Œcumenical Councils, and it was with no 'bated breath' that the Church has delivered to us the truth on those great doctrines of the Holy TRINITY and of the Incarnation on which all other questions of our most Holy Faith must ultimately rest.

2. Secondly, we find in the history of this period one answer to the complaint so often made about the Church that in the explanations which she gives, as for example in the *Quicunque*, of the mysteries of the Being of God and of the Relation of the Blessed Persons to each other, she has departed from the simplicity of the Gospel. The answer simply is that the explanations were forced upon her; it was no use for the Church to confine herself to simple Gospel expressions when people all round were explaining them away; perhaps after what we have learnt about these great answers and explanations which the Church was compelled again and again to make, we may better understand as we repeat the *Quicunque* how each statement was forced from the Church because this one or that one denied the truth contained in it.

3. Thirdly, let us mark the emphatic denial which the history of the Period of the Councils gives to the mediæval claims of the Papacy. (a) It tells us first that great saints may die out of communion with Rome; (b) that so far from œcumenical councils having to be convoked by the authority of the Pope the seven greatest councils were convoked by the Emperor,<sup>1</sup> some of them without even the knowledge, much less consent, of the Roman bishop; (c) that so far from the Pope presiding at œcumenical councils the legates of S. Leo at Chalcedon are the first instance of the Pope's presiding whether personally or by legate, and at Chalcedon, as is well known, things were done in direct opposition to the Pope's wishes and the wishes of his legates; and (d) that so far from the infallible utterance of the Pope being needed for the guidance of the Church, no special help was afforded by the See of Rome in the settlement of controversies on vital questions, as the Arian controversy about the Divinity of our LORD; Liberius, Bishop of Rome, actually contradicted the truth when he repudiated S. Athanasius and signed a form of creed drawn up in the interests of heresy;<sup>2</sup> and at Chalcedon the 'Tome' of S. Leo

<sup>1</sup> See on the Convocation of General Councils, Note I at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> As to the document signed by Liberius, see Hefele, *History of the Councils*, ii. 230-246; Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 275-287 (ed. 3).

itself, valuable as were the services rendered to orthodoxy by that great Pope, was not accepted as the last word of the successor of S. Peter, but because after serious discussion and examination the Fathers of the Council judged that it truly expressed the mind of the Church.

4. Fourthly, the history of the rise of the heresies with which the four great councils dealt, bids us be on our guard against the tempers which gave rise to them. We may not be in danger of falling into the actual heresies which the Church has condemned, but in the controversies of to-day we are surely in not less danger than there was at that time of the kind of temper which gives birth to heresy. Considered from this point of view the four heresies fall into two great groups—those of Arius and Nestorius springing out of an irreverent temper of mind not afraid to speculate on the deep things of God, a temper which we may perhaps describe as rationalistic; and those of Apollinaris and Eutyches springing from a mistaken reverence which could not appreciate the condescension of Almighty God or trust Him to take care of His own honour, and which forgot the dignity of human nature in its inability to consider it apart from the sin which Adam had added to it by the Fall. It would be very interesting to consider, if it came within our province, the way in which these two tempers have

given birth to other heresies and mistaken beliefs, but we cannot do so now. Only let us be on our guard against them, and, not less, against that bitterness and contentiousness which we have seen not only, alas, in the heretics, but also in those who opposed them, even in the greatest. The history of S. Cyril and even of S. Leo is in this respect often very sad reading: we must thank God that we have also the glorious and blessed examples of S. Athanasius and of S. Gregory Nazianzene and of many others.

5. Fifthly, there is one other lesson, perhaps the greatest, which we have dwelt on before, and about which therefore we need not say much now, namely, the bearing of all this controversy upon personal religious life. It is not merely a question of abstract theology: a right faith or a wrong one as to the Person of our LORD must bear upon the life of him who holds it; Redemption and Salvation are practical, personal matters; it must make the whole difference to our manhood whether He has borne it, and bears it now, or not; whether or not He has sanctified all the stages of human life, birth, childhood, manhood, death, by passing through them; whether or not it is One and the Self-Same Who was from all eternity with the Father in the unapproachable glory and inaccessible light,



and Who for us men and for our salvation was born of a human Mother, and lived a human life, and died the death that we must die, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, and shall come again, He the Self-Same, God and Man, to be our judge.

6. Lastly, there is need of one word of warning: 'CHRIST,' it has been said, 'is truer than our Science of Him.'<sup>1</sup> This means, that strive as we may to express rightly the truth as to His Divine and Adorable Person, He remains truer than any words we can say about Him. God's Revelation to us is made in words that we can understand, not in words that can ever really express all that He is. As we have seen, for example, in the Arian controversy, the title Son of God expresses as nearly as is possible the relation of the Eternal Son to the Eternal Father, yet it does not and cannot express the whole truth about it. And so with all the language in which by the merciful guidance of the Holy Spirit the Church has been led to express her Faith, we are not diminishing aught from our gratitude for it when we say that, true as the language of Creeds and Councils is, there is something truer still, something behind it all—and that something is the LORD Himself.

Behind the explicit language of Creeds and

<sup>1</sup> Du Bose, *The Ecumenical Councils*, p. 321.

Councils is the implicit Faith and mind of the Church; behind the mind and consciousness of the Church is the teaching of Apostles and Evangelists in the Holy Gospels; behind the Holy Gospels is the great reality to which they bear witness—the One Divine Person in two Natures, very God and very Man, He Whom we worship as co-equal and co-*é*ternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in Whom we trust as Saviour from our sins, Whom we follow as our perfect Example, and Whom we look for as our Judge—JESUS CHRIST our LORD, Son of God and Son of Mary, God from everlasting, Man for evermore.

## CHAPTER X

### THE INCARNATION AND THE ATONEMENT

Oblatus est quia Ipse voluit.

*Isa. liii. 7, Vulg.*

Vexilla Regis prodeunt,  
Fulget crucis mysterium,  
Quo carne carnis conditor  
Suspensus est patibulo.

*Venantius Fortunatus.*

IN the preceding chapters we have considered the great doctrine of the Incarnation as it has been authoritatively delivered to us by the Church, and as it is set forth in the writings of the Sacred Canon. We may conveniently consider it now in relation to other great doctrines of the Faith and in relation to the practical needs of Christian life.

In the present chapter we shall consider the doctrine of the Incarnation as it bears upon and illuminates the doctrine of the Atonement. It is probably not too much to say that no isolation of one doctrine from another has been attended by such disastrous results as the isolation of the Atone-

ment from the Incarnation, and that for two obvious reasons; first, because, momentous and significant as our Lord's Death was, its full significance cannot be appreciated apart from His Life, and, secondly, because that which He wrought, both in life and death, only appears at its true worth in view of the truth of His Person; we cannot divorce any man's death from his life, nor can we rightly understand what any man does apart from the knowledge of what he is. In the presence of so awful and so mysterious a scene as that which was enacted upon Calvary and clearly set forth before men's eyes by the preaching of the Apostles<sup>1</sup> we almost recoil from any attempt to explain or to comprehend; 'unless it were too vast for our full intellectual comprehension,' as it has been most truly said, it 'would surely be too narrow for our spiritual needs.'<sup>2</sup> But true as that is, and impossible as it is for us to grasp with our finite intellects the full significance of the Atonement, the difficulty of even accepting it, intellectually, is almost overwhelming without some grasp of the doctrine of the Incarnation. To lose the 'proportion of the faith'<sup>3</sup> has ever been fraught with immense danger to the holding of the Truth, yet

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Balfour, *The Foundations of Belief*, p. 259.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xii. 6, τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως.

we are seldom free from the tendency to lose it. And this has been particularly the case with regard to the two great doctrines which we are now proposing to consider. For centuries a view of the Atonement was very widely prevalent in the Church which could hardly have found favour if men had been careful to prophesy according to 'the proportion of the Faith'; the theory held by very many from the time of S. Leo until it was rejected through the influence of the *Cur Deus Homo* of S. Anselm, that our LORD'S Death was a ransom paid to the Devil, could not, we should have thought, have become so widely prevalent unless men had so pressed the metaphor of the ransom as to make it contradict the truth of GOD'S Omnipotence, and unless they had to some extent forgotten that 'that which setteth the high price upon this Sacrifice is this, that He Which offereth it to GOD is GOD.'<sup>1</sup> So again the theory of S. Anselm himself, immeasurably more worthy though it was, had at least a tendency to forget the absolute unity of will between Him Who offered the 'full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction' and Him to whom it was offered.<sup>2</sup> But the climax

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Andrewes quoted in Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 485.

<sup>2</sup> See Aubrey Moore, *Some Aspects of Sin*, p. 89 (speaking of the Anselmic or Scholastic Theory of the Atonement). 'Already

of disaster, resulting from the separation of the Atoning work from the doctrine of the Person of Him by Whom that work was wrought, was reached by the teaching of the Continental Reformers that the Atonement was an offering to propitiate the Eternal Father, represented almost as one of the deities of the heathen who needed to be propitiated by the blood of innocent victims, and as wrath without love. This theory, resulting from pressing to extremes the meaning of the word *ἱλασμός*, propitiation, twice used by S. John<sup>1</sup> to describe our LORD's Atoning work, could not have gained ground in the way it did, if men had kept 'the proportion of the Faith,' if they had remembered the absolute unison in will and in justice and in love between the Father and the Son, if they had not overlooked the way in which Holy Scripture describes the Atoning Death as the culmination of a Life of willing obedience

the suggestion of a transaction, if not a bargain, between the Father and the Son has appeared, and the inexorableness of the Divine Justice is appealed to, to show the necessity of CHRIST's Work.'

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. John ii. 2; iv. 10. Note that S. John does not speak in either of these passages of propitiating the Eternal Father, an idea which is altogether excluded, at least in the heathen sense of propitiation, by the context of iv. 10, in which S. John says that the Father Himself out of love for us sent the Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The fact that this is the Scriptural use of *ἱλασμός* is well noted by Bengel, who says, "*ἱλασμός tollit offensam contra Deum.*"—Bengel in Rom. iii. 24.



and, as such, pleasing to the Eternal Father. As S. Bernard says, 'Non mors sed voluntas placuit sponte morientis.'<sup>1</sup>

It is this theory of the Atonement, with its suggestion of the injustice of God, which has been so fruitful of unbelief wherever, through the influence of the Reformation, it became prevalent both on the Continent and in England, and it affords one of the most striking illustrations of the effect which doctrine has upon morals. The isolation, in thought, of the Atoning Death from the redemption of human nature by its assumption into God led inevitably to the idea of a substitution of the righteousness of CHRIST for man's own righteousness, which in practice could only have disastrous results. In one sense man has no righteousness of his own, but in another and equally true sense CHRIST's righteousness is so made over to man as to become man's own. God cannot call a man what he is not; God calls a man righteous because He makes him so, because He not only clothes man with the righteousness of CHRIST but causes that righteousness to pervade and interpenetrate man's being. In other words CHRIST's work for us cannot be separated from CHRIST's work in us, and His work in us is made possible by the union of our

<sup>1</sup> S. Bernard, *De error. Abael.* 21.

nature with His in the Incarnation.<sup>1</sup> If we forget or overlook what the Incarnation effected for the cleansing of human nature as a whole, and dwell only upon the Atonement as the great Sacrifice once offered for sin, we are at least in danger of forgetting CHRIST's work in us through our exclusive emphasis upon His work for us. It is not meant that we should overlook either; there has been in the past a great tendency in English religious thought to dwell on the most precious and most blessed fact of the Atonement and to discuss theories of that fact almost to the exclusion of the Incarnation, and it is possible that there is a tendency, perhaps a growing tendency, which we need to guard against at present, towards a treatment of the Incarnation which to some extent isolates it from its necessary<sup>2</sup> result in the Atoning Death. The Incarnation, as S. Paul teaches, was an act of obedience to the Will of God which did not stop short even of death; it was an obedience up to the very point of death, *μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ*.<sup>3</sup>

We cannot then without great risk of error both in doctrine and morals isolate one part of the truth

<sup>1</sup> See Gore, *S. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, pp. 59 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Necessary, that is, in view of those conditions in which the Incarnation took place. See Note J at the end of this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. ii. 8.

from another, least of all can we isolate the Atonement from the Incarnation. And the purpose of the present chapter is to show how the doctrine of the Incarnation does in fact bear upon and illuminate the doctrine of the Atonement. Without attempting to enter upon the question of the many difficulties which surround that great doctrine, an attempt which would necessitate a separate treatise, we shall only seek to shew how a clear apprehension of the truth as to our LORD'S Person does help us to understand His Atoning work.

1. First, He Who died upon the Cross was very Man like unto His brethren in all things, sin only except. He was the Son of Man, and as such not only perfect Man but also the perfect representative of all mankind. Mankind was summed up in Him in such a sort as that His acts can be truly said to represent mankind. And this is true, above all, of the Atoning Death. Mankind at His Coming lay under the sentence and shadow of death as the penalty of disobedience; and so entirely was mankind enfolded and enwrapped by the bonds of that slavery to sin which had become fastened upon it through the disobedience of the First Adam, and which had gone on increasing in its tyranny through man's continued rebellion, that there was no man who could so free himself from that slavery as to be

able to pay the penalty of the complete and willing offering of obedience ‘*usque ad mortem*’ which the offended Law required. Yet it was inevitable that the penalty should be paid; God could not take back what He had said, He could not break His word. Then it was that the ineffable Mercy devised a way of satisfying the ineffable Justice. God Himself, in the Person of the Eternal Son, was made Man, took unto Himself Human Nature in such a way as to be able to offer in it the Sacrifice of a perfect obedience. That Sacrifice He offered as the Son of Man, that is, as we have seen, not only as perfect Man Himself but also as the perfect and fitting Representative of mankind. Now in the acts of a representative the person represented may in a true sense be said to act himself. *Qui facit per alium facit per se*. So in this great Act mankind, in the Person of its true Representative, really took part, and S. Paul is not afraid to say that in His Death all mankind died. ‘For the love of CHRIST constraineth us; because we thus judge that One died for all, therefore all died.’<sup>1</sup> S. Paul as he contem-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14, R.V. There is no translation in the whole Bible for which we can be more grateful to the Revisers than this. The ignoring of the force of the aorist (*ἀπέθανον*) in the A.V. not only obscures the truth on which S. Paul is insisting that CHRIST’s Act was a representative act, but conveys a wrong meaning into his words by emphasising the state of death rather than the act of death.

plates the Death of the Son of Man beholds in it the death of all mankind ; he sees there, in that offering of a perfectly willing obedience, the payment of that penalty which, left to himself, man could not pay ; he sees there, in that most precious Death, the dying of himself and of all mankind to the old life of sin and shame through the gate of which lay the passage to a new life of penitence and hope. Thus CHRIST's supreme act of obedience became ours, ours 'not by formal imputation, but through the law which constitutes His life the original spring of our own.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Atoning Death is the representative act of all mankind, the means whereby man acknowledges his sin, confesses the righteousness of God's sentence, and pays the penalty which else he could not pay. In that sense we confess, with adoring thankfulness and wonder, that He died for us, in our stead, as our Proxy and our Substitute. But so confessing and so believing, we dare not forget that we have our part to do. It remains that each man for himself should realise his own union with the Life and Death of the Representative of his race. We must put away all idea of a legal fiction. Union with CHRIST, carrying with it all the benefits of His Death and Passion, is a real and not a

<sup>1</sup> Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 422.

fictitious thing; it is made over to us by means of the Sacraments through which CHRIST, on His part, bestows upon us the gifts which we recognise and accept by an act of faith. And, further, it is a union which demands constant effort on man's part to correspond with the grace of GOD which flows from union with Him. The work of CHRIST in the Atonement was not in order that man might be set free from the obligation of the moral law, nor was it in order that man might thenceforward rest in the assurance that, because all had been done for him, he had nothing else to do. CHRIST 'died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for their sakes died and rose again.'<sup>1</sup> Life 'in CHRIST' implies a participation in His offering of a perfect obedience even though that obedience may not, and cannot, mean for us what it meant for Him. Each man must make Him, sacramentally and morally, for himself what potentially He is for all mankind, its true and proper Representative.

2. But He Who died upon the Cross was not only Man; He was GOD too. And as, with the eye of faith, we behold the Cross flooded with the light of His Divinity Who hangs upon it, we see at once how all those difficulties as to the justice of

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 15.



God in the Atonement melt away before the evidence of His unutterable love. It is no longer the work of One with so little idea of justice as that He can wreak His vengeance, incurred by a guilty race, upon an innocent Victim ; it is the supreme expression of the love of the Eternal Father, shewing itself in the willing Sacrifice of His Only-Begotten Son, and of the love of the Son Himself offering Himself in entire conformity with the Will of the Father for the race whose perfect Representative He is.

The truth that He Who died upon the Cross was one in will and love with the Father should keep us for ever from any doubt as to the justice of the Atonement. He was the willing Sacrifice, not the unwilling victim. What the Father willed the Son willed also,<sup>1</sup> and the love of God for the world was manifested not more by His act Who died for it than by His Who gave Him up to die. God is love ; and the Atonement is the supreme manifestation of God's love. 'It is treason against the love of God to speak as if the wrath of the Father could rest for one moment upon the Well-beloved Son ; or as if that mysterious death were needed to win back for

<sup>1</sup> The Vulgate translation of Isaiah liii. 7 which stands at the head of this chapter, though not an exact rendering, expresses a great truth : 'Oblatus est quia Ipse voluit.'



sinner the Father's love. Against all such immoral suggestions, it is enough to remind ourselves that the love of God was the *moving cause*, and not the *result* or the *effect* of the death of CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>

The Atonement, because it was the Self-Oblation of Him Who was one with the Father in will and in love, was the supreme manifestation of that eternal love which had called man into being, but it was also the manifestation of that eternal righteousness which man had outraged by his sin. For it was the way devised by God Himself by means of which He might be able to forgive the sinner without at the same time compromising His own righteousness and holiness and hatred of sin. God must be true to Himself, and whilst He freely forgives the sinner He must make it clear, if we may so speak with reverence, that He in no way condones or minimises the greatness of the sin. Forgiveness does not mean mere letting off; God's holy and righteous anger against sin must not be compromised. 'If God,' says Dr. Dale, 'does not assert the principle that sin deserves punishment by punishing it, He must assert that principle in some other way. Some Divine act is required which shall have all the moral worth and significance of the act by which the penalties of sin would have been

<sup>1</sup> Aubrey Moore, *Some Aspects of Sin*, p. 81.

inflicted on the sinner.’<sup>1</sup> That act was wrought when He Who might have inflicted the penalty willed to endure it. In the words of the same great writer, ‘He on Whom the sins of men had brought the dread necessity of asserting the principle that they deserved to suffer, and Who, as it seems to us, could not decline to assert it—He through Whose lips the sentence of the eternal Law of Righteousness must have come, condemning those who had sinned to exile from the light and life of God—He by Whose power the sentence must have been executed—He Himself, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, laid aside His eternal glory, assumed our nature, was forsaken of God, died on the Cross, that the sins of men might be remitted. It belonged to Him to assert, by His own act, that suffering is the just result of sin. He asserts it, not by inflicting suffering on the sinner, but by enduring suffering Himself. . . . The mysterious unity of the Father and the Son rendered it possible for God at once to endure and to inflict penal suffering, and to do both under conditions which constitute the infliction and the endurance the grandest moment in the moral history of God.’<sup>2</sup>

Enough has perhaps been said to suggest with

<sup>1</sup> Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 392, 393.

what illuminating power the doctrine of the Incarnation bears upon the doctrine of the Atonement. It is not contended that all difficulties forthwith disappear, but at least it may be said that, once we have laid hold of the truth of our LORD's true GODHEAD and perfect Manhood, there are no longer the insuperable bars to accepting the doctrine of the Atonement which accompany the failure to accept or to appreciate the fulness of the Church's faith in the LORD Incarnate.<sup>1</sup> He Who died upon the Cross, in that He was the Son of Man, acted there as man's true and proper Representative; in that He was the Son of God He thereby manifested the eternal Love and vindicated the eternal Righteousness.

It seems right to add one thing: the Atonement, even when it is illuminated by the doctrine of the Incarnation, far surpasses our finite understanding. The Death of Him Who is not only like unto us in all things sin only except, but is also consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father, must ever remain one of the most stupendous of all mysteries. But our appropriation of its priceless worth does not

<sup>1</sup> Thus Dr. Dale points out that the source of Dr. Martineau's moral charges against the Atonement is to be found in his own inadequate doctrine of the Incarnation, 'He must not discuss the Evangelical theory of the Atonement on the Unitarian theory of the Person of CHRIST.'—*The Atonement*, p. 396.

depend on our apprehension of its mystery. Alike to the unlettered peasant and to the learned theologian the Atoning Death is the one refuge, the one hope, the one remedy for sin; for we are saved not by this or that theory of the Atonement but by the fact that it has been made. 'The power of the great Sacrifice for the sins of the world lies in itself, and not in our explanations of it. Even when the doctrine of the Church has been most corrupt, the Death of CHRIST has continued to appeal to the hearts of men with unique and all but irresistible force.'<sup>1</sup> S. Anselm himself, who wrote with such exact learning of the Atonement, though as we have seen even his conception of it is marred by something of legal formality, could yet express his entire and profound trust in the One great Sacrifice in words which for all time represent its blessed reality apart from all theory and from all explanation—'Come then,' he says, 'while the soul is yet within thee; in that Death alone place all thy whole trust; have trust in no other thing whatever: to that Death commit thyself wholly; in it shelter thyself entirely; in that Death wrap thyself wholly; and if the LORD GOD shall will to judge thee say, LORD I cast the Death of our LORD JESUS CHRIST between me and Thy

<sup>1</sup> Dale, *The Atonement*, p. 436.

judgment, otherwise I cannot contend with Thee. And if He shall say to thee that thou art a sinner, say, LORD I set the Death of our LORD JESUS CHRIST between Thee and my sins. If He shall say to thee that thou hast merited damnation, say, LORD I place the Death of our LORD JESUS CHRIST between me and my evil deservings, and His merits do I offer for the merits which I ought to have and have not. If He shall say that He is angry with thee, say, LORD I put the Death of our LORD JESUS CHRIST between me and Thine anger. And having said all, say yet once again, LORD I place the Death of our LORD JESUS CHRIST between Thee and me and Thine anger. And if any man shall put himself in thy way and set himself against thee, set between thyself and him the merits of the Passion of CHRIST.’<sup>1</sup>

Truly ‘pectus facit theologum.’ Exact theological knowledge is not inconsistent with evangelical devotion to the Atoning work of CHRIST; and, on the other hand, the heart which accepts the love of the Atonement is of stronger avail than the intellect which cannot grasp its meaning or is staggered by its awe.

<sup>1</sup> S. Anselm, *Admonitio Morienti*.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE INCARNATION AND THE HOLY EUCCHARIST

For CHRIST in the Sacrament is not altogether unlike CHRIST in the cratch.<sup>1</sup> To the cratch we may well liken the husk or outward Symboles of it. Outwardly it seemes little worth, but is rich of contents; as was the crib, this day, with CHRIST in it. For what are they but *infirmæ et egenæ elementa*, weak and poore elements of themselves; yet in them we find CHRIST. Even as they did, this day, in *præsepi jumentorum panem Angelorum*, in the beasts' crib the food of angels: Which very food our signes both represent and present unto us.—*Bishop Andrewes*.<sup>2</sup>

WHEN S. Cyril of Alexandria was arguing against the errors of Nestorius he used more than once the received belief as to the Eucharist as an illustration of what the Catholic Church held as to the Incarnation.<sup>3</sup> It was the perception of a true analogy which led S. Cyril so to argue; for the more we

<sup>1</sup> Cratch, *i.e.* crib or manger. Cf. *crèche*.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon XII. on the Nativity, preached on Christmas Day 1618.

<sup>3</sup> See S. Cyril, *adv. Nest.* iv. 5; *Ep.* iii. *ad Nest.* 7.

consider the doctrine of the Incarnation the more do we find it a help to our understanding of the doctrine of that great Sacrament which is so especially a means of extending to us the benefits of the Incarnation; it would indeed be hardly too much to say that the doctrine of the Eucharist may be tested and safeguarded at almost every point by the doctrine of our LORD's Person.

The object of the present chapter is briefly to indicate some of the points at which the one doctrine illuminates the other and guards it from error, and it will be well at the outset to state, in as few words and as clearly as possible, what the Church teaches as to the Holy Sacrament of the LORD's Body and Blood. It must be remembered that the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist was not for centuries in dispute, either as to its sacrificial nature or as to the nature and mode of our LORD's Presence in it, and it was therefore not the subject of œcumenical decisions and definitions such as were called for in the case of the doctrine of the Incarnation.<sup>1</sup> It may be said that, whilst the mystery of our

<sup>1</sup> See John Keble, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, Letter cxix. 'I have long had an opinion that, in respect of the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, we are bound to be especially careful how we make doctrinal statements in such sense as to charge dissentients with heresy; for this reason, that while the great truths of the Creeds have been settled, even as to the wording connected



LORD'S Words of Institution was fully recognised by the ancient Fathers of the Church and by the venerable liturgical forms in which those words were enshrined, there does not seem to have been any attempt to go beyond the actual Words by way either of definition or explanation.

The teaching of the ancient Fathers and liturgies was faithfully adhered to and expressed by those who drew up the English Prayer Book, and in their language we may briefly state what the Church has always believed and taught.<sup>1</sup>

Firstly, as to the relation of the outward part or sign to the inward part or thing signified, the Homilies speak of 'His blessed Body and Blood under the form of Bread and Wine';<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, as to the reception, 'The Body and Blood of CHRIST . . . are verily and indeed taken

with them, by true Œcumenical Councils (in which statement I include the Doctrine of Baptism, as connected with the Pelagian controversy), it has so happened, in the Providence of GOD, that the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist has never been subject to similar enactments until the eleventh or twelfth century, after the separation of East and West.'

<sup>1</sup> The statements which follow are not of course complete or exhaustive as to Eucharistic Doctrine; they are only quoted as expressing those aspects of it which seem to be especially illuminated by the Doctrine of the Incarnation.

<sup>2</sup> *First Book of Homilies, ad finem.* Though the Homilies are not authoritative in the same sense as the Prayer Book, yet they 'contain a godly and wholesome doctrine.'

and received by the faithful in the LORD'S Supper';<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, as to the means of their reception, 'The mean whereby the Body of CHRIST is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.'<sup>2</sup>

In the Book of Common Prayer the English Church goes back to the simple statement of fact with which 'the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops'<sup>3</sup> of the Undivided Church had been content, before explanations of the fact such as transubstantiation and consubstantiation had been attempted on the one hand, and before explainings away of the fact had been resorted to by the followers, for example, of Calvin and Zuinglius on the other. Thus whilst in the twenty-eighth Article she condemned explicitly the explanation of the Presence commonly known as transubstantiation, as overthrowing the nature of a Sacrament, she yet refused to condemn the doctrine of the Real Presence by deliberately removing from the 'Black Rubric' the words which did condemn it as it first stood and which were entirely inconsistent with the whole tenor of her liturgy. It should also be borne in mind that Bishop Gheste who wrote the twenty-eighth Article has left it on record that he

<sup>1</sup> The Catechism.

<sup>2</sup> Article XXVIII.

<sup>3</sup> Canon of 1571, *Concerning Preachers*.

did not intend by the word 'only' to 'exclude ye presence of CHRISTIS Body fro the Sacrament but onely ye grossenes and sensiblenes in ye receaving thereof.'<sup>1</sup> What the Church of England repudiated was not the Real Presence as it is commonly called, which is merely the statement of a fact based upon our LORD's own Words, 'This is My Body, This is My Blood,' but the way in which mediæval theologians had sought to explain that fact.

The doctrine of the English Church is in fact the doctrine of the ancient Fathers and liturgies, namely that in virtue of consecration, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Bread and Wine become the veils of the real though unseen presence of the LORD, so that after and by virtue of consecration they become what they were not before, and are no longer 'common bread nor common wine' but 'the Body and Blood of the Incarnate JESUS.'<sup>2</sup>

Then comes in the province of faith: faith is the mean whereby we recognise and receive that which already exists independently of it; faith is as it were the organ through which we behold that which is invisible to the bodily eye and imper-

<sup>1</sup> See Gheste's *Letter to Cecil Lord Burghley*, Dec. 22, 1566, quoted in Maclear, *Introduction to the Articles*, p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> S. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, c. 66. Οὐ γὰρ ὡς κοινὸν ἄρτον οὐδὲ κοινὸν πόμα ταῦτα λαμβάνομεν, ἀλλὰ . . . ἐκείνου τοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι.

ceptible to the bodily sense ; faith is as it were the hand stretched out to receive the Gift offered for our acceptance ; faith is the faculty which enables us to partake to our profit, as opposed to the partaking to our condemnation of which S. Paul speaks, and to assimilate to our own life the Life of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. In thus regarding faith as the eye which perceives, and the hand which takes, and the faculty which assimilates the holy Gifts, rather than as the instrument which effects their presence, we do not belittle or depreciate the operation and province of faith, while at the same time we seek to safeguard what we believe to be the truth, namely that the invisible Actor in every Sacrament is the Holy Ghost working through the human instrumentality of the validly ordained priesthood. This is what is meant by the Real Objective Presence—that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist the very Body and Blood of our Redeemer is present ‘under the form of bread and wine,’ through the power of the Holy Ghost in virtue of consecration, and that ‘the mean whereby the Body of CHRIST is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of this doctrine it has lately been said by high authority that ‘it is not unlawful to hold it and to teach it in the Church of England.’—*Primary Charge to his diocese* by Frederick, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, 1899, p. 10.

From the doctrine of the Eucharist we return to the doctrine of the Incarnation, acknowledging in both the work of Him Whom the Church confesses as LORD and Life-Giver, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. It was He Who brought to pass by His immaculate Overshadowing the ineffable union of GODHEAD and Manhood in the Incarnation; it was He Whom the Church in her majestic liturgies invoked upon the earthly symbols that they might become the heavenly Food of the LORD's Body and Blood—‘Have mercy upon us, O God, after Thy great mercy, and send forth upon us and upon these gifts lying before Thee Thy all-holy Spirit, the LORD and Life-Giver, Who sitteth enthroned with Thee GOD the Father and reigneth with Thy Only-begotten Son, consubstantial and co-eternal, Who spake in the Law and in the Prophets and in Thy New Testament, Who came down in the form of a dove upon our LORD JESUS CHRIST in the River Jordan and abode upon Him, Who came down upon Thine Apostles in the form of fiery tongues in the Upper Room of holy and glorious Sion on the day of Pentecost, Him Thy all-holy Spirit send down, O LORD, upon us and upon these holy gifts lying before Thee, that coming with His holy and good and glorious Presence He may sanctify and make this bread the holy Body of

Thy CHRIST and this cup the precious Blood of Thy CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>

We may consider three ways in which the Holy Spirit's Work in the Sacrament is parallel with His Work in the Incarnation :

(1) As to the reality of the 'inward part.' As in the Incarnation the Divine was hidden and the human was apparent, so it is in the Eucharist : that which appeared to the Magi and to the Shepherds was the human form of a little child, that which appears to the communicant is the earthly form of bread and wine ; but just as with the utmost propriety we can speak of the Child in His Mother's arms as God, so too with the utmost propriety the Church speaks of the consecrated elements as the Body and Blood of the Saviour. In the Sacrament, as in the Incarnation, earthly and heavenly, human and Divine, meet and are one ; there is in both under the earthly and human forms the real Presence of the heavenly and Divine. He Who was

<sup>1</sup> From the 'Invocation' in the Greek Liturgy of S. James. See Hammond's *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, p. 43 (ed. 1878 ; pp. 53, 54 in Brightman's edition, 1896). The prominent position of the Invocation in the Eastern Liturgies is well known ; it is thought that there are traces of it in the Western Liturgies, but it is certainly, to say the least, very much obscured. It has been restored in three English rites, those of the First Prayer Book of Edward VI., of the Church of Scotland, and of the American Church.

content to hide His Divinity under the veil of the Manhood is content now to hide His Sacred Presence under the veils of the Sacrament, yet so real and true is the union in both cases that as in the Incarnation those who beheld and touched our LORD in the days of His earthly life believed themselves to be beholding and touching the Word of life,<sup>1</sup> so too in the Eucharist as surely as we behold the consecrated bread and wine so surely with the eye of faith do we behold the holy Body and precious Blood which by the power of the Holy Ghost they have become. The parallel of course must not be pressed to extreme lengths; it is not meant that the earthly symbols in the Eucharist correspond with the human form taken by the Eternal Son whilst the inward Part of the Sacrament corresponds with His Divinity. In virtue of the consecration the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of the Risen and Glorified CHRIST, and in that sense the earthly elements rather correspond to 'the Manger with CHRIST in it,' to which they are likened by Bishop Andrewes.<sup>2</sup> But so long as we do not press the parallel too far the visible and invisible parts of the Sacrament are a legitimate and useful illustration of the visible and the invisible in the Incarna-

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. John i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See the quotation at the head of this chapter.



tion, and, conversely, the doctrine of the Incarnation bears upon and illuminates in the same way the doctrine of the Eucharist. There is in both the hiding of a great reality under the form of 'infirmia et egena elementa.'

(2) And, secondly, there is in both the reality of the outward and the visible. The greatness of the inward reality does not annihilate or swallow up the outward. The importance of this principle was fully emphasised in the Eutychian controversy; Eutyches taught that after the Incarnation our LORD no longer existed in two Natures; according to him the Manhood was really absorbed in the GODHEAD. As against this teaching, the great work of the Council of Chalcedon was to emphasise the truth that in the One Person of the LORD Incarnate the two Natures existed without confusion, *ἀσυγχύτως*. The Fathers appealed to the doctrine of the Eucharist as a parallel to the doctrine which they were defending against Eutyches, as confirming the truth that the Divine Nature does not annihilate or swallow up the human nature; the permanence of the outward and visible in the Eucharist was taken as an illustration of the permanence of our LORD's Manhood in the Incarnation. Thus we see how attempts to explain the mode of the union of the two Natures in the One Person were

repeated in the attempts to explain the mode of CHRIST's Presence in the Eucharist. The idea of consubstantiation was in fact a parallel to that confusion of natures in the LORD Incarnate which was involved in the teaching of Apollinaris, whilst the popular Roman doctrine of transubstantiation repeats the error of Eutyches who taught in effect that the human nature was annihilated by the Divine. Great as the philosophical and metaphysical difficulties are in the way of our acceptance of such theories as those of consubstantiation and transubstantiation, the difficulty of accepting them which arises from the theology of the Incarnation is hardly less serious ; for the fact of the Incarnation is the culminating proof of that principle which is so plainly apparent in all God's dealings with us, the principle, namely, that the supernatural does not do away with the natural.

Thus in both directions the Eucharistic doctrine is safeguarded and explained by the doctrine of the Incarnation. Both Nestorius and Eutyches violated the principle of the Incarnation, the one by his denial that the Child in His Mother's arms could in any true sense be termed God, the other by asserting that our LORD was only in appearance Man, the Manhood being really swallowed up in the GODHEAD. So, to take the two opposite

extremes of Eucharistic teaching—Zuinglianism on the one hand and the popular Roman theory on the other—we see how each ‘overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament,’<sup>1</sup> the one by denying that there is any real ‘inward part or thing signified,’ the other teaching that the outward is only in appearance, being in fact transubstantiated into the Inward. To overthrow the nature of a Sacrament is in fact to violate the principle of the Incarnation.

(3) Thirdly, as we turn from the consideration of God’s work in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist to the consideration of our own attitude towards that work, we find yet another parallel between them in the sphere and province of our faith. For as when our LORD was upon earth it was faith which put a difference between the multitudes who thronged Him and the poor stricken woman who touched Him, so now it is faith which makes the difference between those who receive the holy Body and Blood to their profit and those who receive it to their condemnation. As in the Incarnation the benefits of our LORD’S Divine Person were brought into touch with the recipients of those benefits by means of His Humanity, so in the Eucharist we are brought into relation to the

<sup>1</sup> Article XXVIII.

Sacred Person of Him Who is both Man and God by the touch of His risen and glorified Manhood. But, as then so now, it is faith which recognises and faith which appropriates the benefits offered for its recognition and appropriation. Faith does not effect the Presence in the Eucharist any more than faith made Him present in the days of His earthly life; He was there in the cradle, there in the temple, there by the shores of the lake, there upon the Cross, whether men recognised Him and believed in Him or not; the power and the virtue were within Him whether men had faith to be healed by it or not. So we understand why it was that again and again He sought to call forth men's faith; so we understand why it was that unless men believed in Him His power of helping them was held in check.<sup>1</sup> The parallel between the Incarnation and the Eucharist, in so far as the province of faith is concerned, is even closer when we consider what is told us as to our LORD's Presence on earth after His Resurrection. That Presence was in the highest sense a spiritual Presence; it was a Presence no longer subject to natural conditions. S. Paul teaches that the Resurrection body is a spiritual body,<sup>2</sup> and as our bodies will be after the Resurrection such CHRIST's Body was,

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xiii. 58.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 44.

and is. CHRIST's Presence then, after the Resurrection, was in the highest sense a spiritual Presence, and, as such, it was recognised and apprehended by faith. Our LORD was manifested after His Resurrection not to all the people but to His Own chosen witnesses.<sup>1</sup> This is not saying that the Body of the Resurrection was not a real Body, and indeed our LORD took great pains to convince His Apostles of the reality of that Body in which He had risen from the dead. Spiritual is opposed not to real but to natural.<sup>2</sup> Our LORD's Body after His Resurrection was a real body, even we may say a material body, but it was no longer subject to natural conditions; so He was 'spiritually discerned'; He was discerned by those who had faith to see Him. Even so it is in the Eucharist: CHRIST's Presence therein is, we say, a spiritual Presence, but we do not mean by that an unreal presence; here too spiritual is opposed not to real but to natural, and by declaring our LORD to be spiritually present we mean that He is present in a supernatural way. It is a Presence which is spiritually discerned, a Presence which though it is in no sense effected by our faith is yet recognised and appropriated by it. To the

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 41.

<sup>2</sup> On what is meant by a 'spiritual' body, see Professor Milligan, *The Resurrection of our Lord*, Lecture 1.

worldling the consecrated symbols appear as bread and wine and nothing more, simply because the worldling is wanting in that faculty by which alone spiritual things are discerned, the faculty of faith. But to him who has eyes to see, the outward elements are the vehicle of the heavenly Gift. The guests in the inn at Bethlehem, the crowds who thronged our LORD during His earthly life, the unbelieving Jews as they gazed upon the empty tomb, have their counterparts now ; so too have the faithful shepherds and the wise men, and the woman who alone was able to ‘touch’ our LORD, and the holy women at the Sepulchre. For both in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist there is the reality of the outward not destroyed nor absorbed by the greatness of the inward ; there is the reality of the inward, spiritually present and spiritually discerned, but no less real because so present and because so discerned ; and, in both, faith is ‘the mean whereby’ we recognise and make our own that which is really present whether we recognise and believe it or no—in the Incarnation the Eternal GODHEAD tabernacling amongst us in the substance of our flesh ; in the Eucharist the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified CHRIST under the sacramental veils of bread and wine. Convinced of the truth of our LORD’s Incarnate Person S. Thomas exclaimed

with adoring rapture, 'My LORD and my God,' and on the conviction of the truth of the Eucharistic Presence the Homily bases its appeal to every faithful soul—'When thou goest up to the reverend Communion to be satisfied with spiritual meats, look thou up with faith upon the holy Body and Blood of thy God; marvel with reverence; touch It with the mind, receive It with the hand of thy heart, and take It fully with thy inward man.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Second Book of Homilies* (A.D. 1563), Homily xv., 'Of the Worthie Receavinge of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christe.'



## CHAPTER XII

### THE INCARNATION AND COMMON LIFE

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favourably on Thy whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery ; and by the tranquil operation of Thy perpetual Providence, carry out the work of man's salvation ; and let the whole world feel and see that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and all things are returning to perfection through Him from Whom they took their origin, even through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

*Sacramentary of S. Gelasius.*<sup>1</sup>

THE Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God was not only the fulfilment and summary of all that had gone before it, it was also the starting-point of a new order of things. It was that, not only because it was the setting of a fresh standard, the holding up of a new and perfect example, but because it was above all the re-creation of humanity by its assumption into personal union with the GODHEAD.

<sup>1</sup> See Bright, *Ancient Collects*, p. 98.

## I

We must lay firm hold of the truth that in the Incarnation the whole of human nature and of human life was affected. The Eternal Son took human nature in the womb of a Virgin Mother in order to cleanse and to elevate human nature as a whole; had He been born as we are born, by the ordinary mode of generation, we do not see how His birth would have affected the whole race of mankind, for in that case a human personality would have separated Him off, so far as we can see, from all others just as it does in the case of every one born into this world.<sup>1</sup> But, as we believe, by the Virgin-Birth He became Man, not a man; and thus, neither changing nor adding to His Divine Personality, He took unto Himself that which would unite Him to the whole human race, not that which would separate Him from it; He took human nature not a human personality. And as a result of this we do not see in Him that prominence of one characteristic over another which we are accustomed to notice and admire in the saints and heroes of our race, and which is in fact 'a mark of imperfection.'<sup>2</sup> Nor again do we see in the LORD

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, pp. 166 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See MacColl, *Christianity in relation to Science and Morals*, p. 134. 'All men and women have some special characteristic; one is brave, another humble, another patient, and so forth.

JESUS CHRIST the prominent characteristic of any particular race or nation; there was in Him that which is best in every race. That is true, we should suppose, even with regard to physical characteristics; the traditional representation of the LORD in Christian art from the earliest times is probably right in not representing Him with the physical characteristics of the Jewish race as some modern realistic art has attempted to do. But most of all is it true of moral characteristics. Our LORD summed up into Himself all mankind, not a part of it; He expressed in His life not some one mark of perfection, but all; not what is the best characteristic of some particular period of history, but all that is best in all time. All mankind, all time, every race, either sex, finds in Him its centre and its archetype. 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one *man* in CHRIST JESUS.'<sup>1</sup>

The contrast between our LORD's Perfect and Moses was the meekest of men, Solomon the wisest, Job the most patient. What does that mean? It means that those qualities predominated over the rest of the character in their respective possessors. But the predominance of any special quality is a mark of imperfection. The perfection of man's constitution is to have its qualities in equipoise; each in its proper place; each coming to the front when required; but none overshadowing the rest . . .'

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iii. 28, R.V.

representative Manhood, and the imperfections and limitations of our own, cannot find better expression than in the words of the Bishop of Durham in his lectures on the Creed. 'For us humanity is broken up into fragments by sex, by race, by time, by circumstance. From the beginning its endowments were not unequally divided between man and woman, whose differences are essential to the true idea of the whole. And we can see that countless nations and ages have not yet exhausted the manifold capacities of manhood and womanhood under the varied disciplines and inspirations of life. Again and again, even in our own experience, some new flash of courage or wisdom or patience or tenderness goes to brighten the picture of man's completed and real self. But in CHRIST there are no broken or imperfect lights. In Him everything which is shewn to us of right and good and lovely in the history of the whole world is gathered up once for all. Nothing limits His humanity, but the limits proper to humanity itself. Whatever there is in man of strength, of justice, of wisdom: whatever there is in woman of sensibility, of purity, of insight, is in CHRIST without the conditions which hinder among us the development of contrasted virtues in one person. CHRIST belongs peculiarly to no one people, to no

one time. And conversely, if there be ought that is noble in the achievements, or in the aspirations of any people or of any time, it finds a place in His sympathy and strength from His example.’<sup>1</sup>

Let us then lay firm hold of the truth that the whole of human nature and of human life was affected by our LORD’s taking it upon Himself. He was not like Moses or Socrates or Charlemagne or King Alfred, each of whom was characteristically the man of his own race and of his own time. The Jew can as little claim Him as exclusively his compatriot as the Englishman can claim Him as exclusively his; the first century can claim Him exclusively as little as the twentieth. That is why Christianity, at least so long as it is true to CHRIST, can never become worn out; that is why it is adapted to the needs of every race; that is why there is no man who cannot find in it, if he will, all that he most needs. ‘In CHRIST,’ as S. Paul teaches, man is ‘a new creature.’<sup>2</sup> If only a man is ‘in CHRIST’ then there is made over to him, in so far as each man needs them, all those great blessings which were infused into humanity by its union with the GODHEAD in the Person of the Son of Man. Our LORD’s gracious works which He

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17.

wrought upon individuals during His earthly life are typical of His work for humanity as a whole. As He changed the water into wine, so He enriches and ennobles what before was poor and commonplace; as He cleansed the leper, so He cleanses human nature from the defilement of sin; as He made the lame to walk and the maimed to be whole, so He strengthens what is weak and makes the crooked straight; as He opened the eyes of the blind, so He lightens the darkness of ignorance and sin; as He raised the dead, so He quickens into newness of life that which is ready to perish. Thus the Incarnation affected human nature as a whole, enriching, ennobling, cleansing, strengthening, straightening, enlightening, quickening. And thus every man who has received from the First Adam a share in that sin-stained humanity which is transmitted to all his descendants may receive 'by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost'<sup>1</sup> a share in that same humanity cleansed and ennobled by the Second Adam. Henceforth it is in the power of every man to obtain a share by Baptism in the Sacred Humanity of the New Head of his race; as S. Paul teaches expressly, 'As many of you as have been baptized into CHRIST have put on CHRIST.'<sup>2</sup> Thus

<sup>1</sup> S. Titus iii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iii. 27.

it is that the Incarnation is brought into touch with the life of every man; thus it is that what the Incarnation, by its purifying and ennobling power, did for human nature as a whole can be appropriated by each man who shares that nature. 'Whatever be our capacities and endowments, due, as the case may be, to our birth, our years, our position, our country, they may be all consecrated through Him Who lived perfectly, Who lived representatively, the life of which we each live a little fragment. Whatever may be our failures, our negligences, our ignorances, they may be all done away in Him, Who bore the sin of the world, and took it away by bearing it.'<sup>1</sup>

And yet further: not only is human life in itself affected by the Incarnation, but human life in all its circumstances, under all the conditions amid which it is lived from the cradle to the grave and in the unknown realms beyond it. There is no stage of human existence through which the Son of Man did not pass, no stage of human existence which His 'infinite worth,'<sup>2</sup> as being also the Son of God, did not sanctify by His passing through it. Birth and infancy and childhood and manhood and death,

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> The expression is Hooker's (*Eccl. Polity*, v. lii. 3). See the passage quoted in full in Note G at the end of this volume.



the grave and the world of spirits, can never be what they were before He passed through them. Nor can we stop there; in the Resurrection and all that followed it the Incarnation still bears upon the fact of human life. We lose much of the meaning of Easter and what follows it in the cycle of the Christian year, if we forget or overlook its bearing upon human life. The Resurrection and the Ascension into heaven and the Session at God's Right Hand were representative acts not less than the acts of our LORD's earthly life:

' He has raised our human nature  
On the clouds to God's Right Hand;  
There we sit in heavenly places,  
There with Him in glory stand;  
JESUS reigns, adored by angels;  
Man with God is on the Throne;  
Mighty LORD, in Thine Ascension  
We by faith behold our own.'<sup>1</sup>

That is true because, not less on the Throne of God than in the Manger and upon the Cross, CHRIST is Perfect Man, and because in His perfect Humanity we may have our share.

So neither can any of the circumstances of life be what they were before He became Man. He was born of a woman, and woman, wherever the religion

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Christopher Wordsworth. See *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 148.

of the Incarnation has prevailed, has been restored to the dignity and glory of her true position as the helpmeet for man.<sup>1</sup> He was poor, and poverty is thenceforward consecrated as a holy state. He was content to work as a carpenter in the shop at Nazareth, and work is restored to the place of honour which it had before the Fall had dimmed its glory by the sweat of toil.<sup>2</sup> He sorrowed with the sorrowful and wept with them that wept, and tears and sorrow are for ever sanctified by the tears and sorrow of the LORD Incarnate. Over His life and over His work the world has written the words failure and defeat, and now for all time they who share with Him the sentence which the world has passed upon that toil-worn life and that death of ignominy and anguish, share also with Him the victory and the triumph. 'Thou hast conquered, O Galilæan.'<sup>3</sup>

The Incarnation then, the taking up of human nature into personal union with the GODHEAD, is the consecration of the whole material order. In it and through it the Eternal Son of God stooping to the lowest depths took hold of human nature and of human life at the point at which the Fall had

<sup>1</sup> Gen. ii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. ii. 15; iii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> The words ascribed by the historian Theodoret to the Emperor Julian when dying. Theodoret, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 25.

left it,<sup>1</sup> and with it all that pertained to it in every stage, in every circumstance, under every condition, *humani nihil a Se alienum putans*.<sup>2</sup> So the Religion of the Incarnation is irreconcilably and for ever opposed to every system and every theory which fails to take account of the true dignity of the material order. Manhood and womanhood, the human body, even the irrational and inanimate creation, have been redeemed and consecrated by Him Who made them at the first.<sup>3</sup> The Incarnation is indeed the setting of the seal of God to His own sentence at the beginning upon everything that He had made, that 'behold, it was very good.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Church, *Pascal, and other Sermons*, p. 138. 'What has man done of worst evil, of which the apparent shadow did not rest on his Deliverer? What unrest, what pain, what privation, troubles his lot which his Deliverer did not share? What is there in the sinner's doom at the Fall—shame, sorrow, death—which the Sinless does not accept, in order, in accepting it, to reverse it? Face to face with the amazing contrarieties of the Fall are the amazing contrarieties of the Incarnation. Face to face with the greatness and the misery of the First man are the greatness and the misery of the Second. And so, at the point where the Fall leaves man, Redemption meets him; and the meeting-point is at the lowest depths.'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>3</sup> In this Hooker sees the special fitness for the Redemption by the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, 'that the institution and restitution of the world might be both wrought by one hand.' *Eccl. Polity*, v. li. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. i. 31.

## II

This was effected by the Incarnation for human nature as a whole: it remains that we should consider the way in which it affects the individual, the way in which, in other words, the individual takes to himself the work of our LORD for the whole of that humanity in which each individual shares. What is required is that each human person, for himself or herself, should be brought into vital union with the Person of the LORD Incarnate. For Christianity is differentiated from other creeds by the fact that it does not consist in 'obedience to a law or even in following an example but in union with a Person.'<sup>1</sup> It is this personal union between CHRIST and the individual which is the subject of the great discourse in the sixth chapter of S. John's Gospel. In that discourse 'from first to last the gift to men on the part of God is set forth as CHRIST "the Son of Man"; and the power by which man makes the gift his own is active "faith."'<sup>2</sup> Thus in few words is expressed the divinely appointed mode of union between the Second Adam and the members of His race. That union is effected on God's side by the great gift of

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Illingworth in the *Expositor*, series III. vol. iii. p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, *The Gospel according to S. John*, p. 112.

‘the Bread which cometh down from heaven,’<sup>1</sup> whilst on our side that gift is appropriated by faith in the Person of Him Who so describes Himself.<sup>2</sup> It would doubtless be wrong to confine or to limit CHRIST’s words to any, even to the greatest, of the means whereby they are fulfilled, and we do not so limit or confine them by saying that the chiefest of the means whereby the gift of union with our LORD’s Person is made over to us is the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. So understanding them, and not as intending to exclude other ways, revealed and even unrevealed, by which God is pleased to unite us to Himself through His Son, we may well ponder on that chiefest and greatest of all, whereby we are one with Him and He with us, and whereby, being so united in personal union, we obtain, each one for himself, our share in the benefits of the Incarnation. Those benefits as they are communicated to us in the Holy Eucharist are summed up in the well-known words of Hooker: ‘It is on all sides plainly confessed, first that this Sacrament is a true and real participation of CHRIST, who thereby imparteth Himself, even His whole entire Person, *as a mystical Head* unto every soul that receiveth Him, and that every such receiver doth thereby incorporate or unite himself unto

<sup>1</sup> S. John vi. 33, 35, 48.

<sup>2</sup> S. John vi. 47.

CHRIST as *a mystical member of Him*, yea of them also whom He acknowledgeth to be His own; secondly, that to whom *the Person of CHRIST* is thus communicated to them He giveth by the same Sacrament His Holy Spirit to sanctify them, as it sanctifieth Him which is their head; thirdly, that what *merit, force or virtue soever there is in His sacrificed body and blood*, we freely fully and wholly have it by this Sacrament; fourthly, that *the effect thereof in us is a real transmutation of our souls and bodies* from sin to righteousness, from death and corruption to immortality and life; fifthly, that because the Sacrament being of itself but a corruptible and earthly creature must needs be thought an unlikely instrument to work so admirable effects in man, we are therefore to rest ourselves altogether upon *the strength of His glorious power* Who is able and will bring to pass that the bread and cup which He giveth us shall be truly the thing He promiseth.<sup>1</sup>

Such then is the Gift of God to men through JESUS CHRIST, the gift of union, living and life-giving,<sup>2</sup> derived, from the Head in Whom all mankind is summed up, into every member of His

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, *Eccl. Polity*, v. lxvii. 7. The italics are Hooker's.

<sup>2</sup> See S. John iv. 10; Acts xi. 17; Rom. v. 15 ff; vi. 23; 2 Cor. xi. 15; Eph. ii. 8.

mystical Body. And thus the benefits of the Incarnation are made over to the individual by the dispensation of the grace of God.<sup>1</sup> The covenanted sphere of grace is the Church, the covenanted channels are the Sacraments. Within that sphere, pre-eminently though not exclusively through those channels, the grace of God is poured into the soul, and man is brought into union, and kept in union, with Him through the life-giving Humanity of the LORD Incarnate. Well may S. Paul speak of 'the exceeding riches of His grace';<sup>2</sup> for whilst it is not 'ordinarily His will to bestow the grace of Sacraments on any but by the Sacraments,'<sup>3</sup> yet within the Church, and even as we must believe to some extent without the Church, God bestows manifold gifts and graces by means and in ways of which oftentimes the recipient is hardly if at all conscious. Grace is given first of all by means of the Sacraments, secondly in answer to prayer,<sup>4</sup> thirdly by God's Almighty Power without the intervention of means and even sometimes beyond the limits of the covenant.<sup>5</sup> But in whatever way it is given it is

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iii. 2, ἡ οἰκονομία τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 7; cf. 1 Tim. i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Hooker, *Eccl. Polity*, v. lvii. 4.

<sup>4</sup> What S. Augustine says of the grace of cleansing is true of other graces too, 'Semel abluimur baptisate, quotidie abluimur oratione.'—*Sermo ad Catech.* 15.

<sup>5</sup> See Note K at the end of this volume.



always the result of that work of cleansing and renewal which was wrought for all mankind when the Eternal Son took upon Himself human nature in order to restore it. 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?'<sup>1</sup>

## III

But the grace of GOD works not without us but with us, and so whilst with adoring love and wonder we acknowledge the greatness of CHRIST's work in the Incarnation, and the extension to us of that work by the dispensation of the grace of GOD, we have to lay to heart the necessity laid upon us of co-operating with that grace if it is to become effectual for our salvation. And so there comes the appeal of CHRIST to our faith and His claim on our allegiance. He appeals to us, even as we appeal to Him, 'by the mystery of the holy Incarnation.' By that which he has done for us He appeals to us to co-operate with the grace which gives us a share in His work. 'Without Me ye can do nothing,'<sup>2</sup> but 'I can do all things through CHRIST who strengtheneth me.'<sup>3</sup> The whole truth and secret

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> S. John xv. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iv. 3.

of personal religion is wrapped up in those words. It is through union with the Person of CHRIST that Christian life is made possible; it is through devotion to Him that Christian life is inspired and kept true. In the pages of the holy Gospels He is offered to us as our Example; through the channels of the Sacraments He is given to us as our Strength; in the lives of His people He calls us to minister to Him; on the Cross He is uplifted as our Sacrifice and our Saviour; and at the last we believe that He shall come to be our Judge. Always and everywhere CHRIST the LORD is revealed to those who have eyes to see Him; always and everywhere He claims our allegiance; always and everywhere He is consecrating human nature and human life. On the one hand, He Himself by passing through it has clothed with unspeakable sanctity all that pertains to the truth of our nature; on the other, we ourselves can sanctify all that we do by doing it in His Name. Joy and sorrow, love and pity, work and rest, death and the grave, the commonest actions of daily life not less than the glorious deeds of the martyrs—all can be sanctified and ennobled and glorified by those who are consciously doing them in union with that humanity which our LORD assumed in the moment of His conception, which He bore spotless and perfect through life and

death, and in which He sits at God's Right Hand enthroned for evermore.

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Domine JESU CHRISTE, Qui ex Patre DEUS magnus, pro nobis dignatus es nasci ex homine parvus, ut per Te factus, per Te salvaretur sine dubio mundus; propitius esto et miserere nobis; nosque a mundanis contagiis munda, et in hoc mundo mundos nos esse constitue, Qui non judicare sed salvare venisti, ut nobis parvulus natus, nobisque filius datus, in Te et regenerationis ortum et adoptionis mereamur consequi donum. Per misericordiam Tuam DEUS noster. Amen.

## NOTES

NOTE A. See p. 88

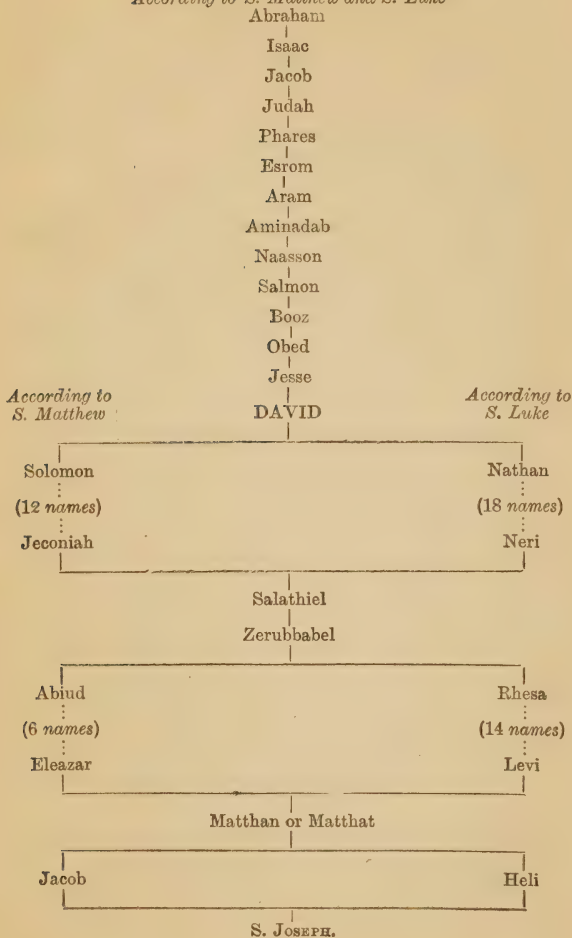
### ON THE GENEALOGIES OF OUR LORD

S. MATTHEW'S genealogy differs from S. Luke's firstly in its extent.

S. Matthew descends in his genealogy from Abraham. S. Luke ascends in his to Adam and to God. This is accounted for by the difference in the scope and aim of the respective Gospels. S. Matthew writes for the Jews to represent our LORD as the Messiah of Prophecy, hence it is natural that he should trace his descent from the Father of the Jewish Race ; S. Luke, writing for the whole world, and with the aim of representing our LORD as the Universal Saviour, as naturally traces his genealogy up to the First Head of the Human Race.

But the main difficulty between the two consists in the fact that after both lines have met in the person of David the one runs through the family of Solomon, and the other through that of Nathan, and only meet between David and S. Joseph in the persons of Salathiel and Zerubbabel, and probably in that of Matthan (S. Matt. i. 15) or Matthat (S. Luke iii. 24), presuming that those are names of the same person, with which exceptions there are no names alike between David and S. Joseph.

*According to S. Matthew and S. Luke*



Of the explanations which have been suggested, that which looks upon one as the genealogy of S. Joseph, and the other as that of the Blessed Virgin has no support from the Fathers and was unheard of before the fifteenth century. It is inconceivable that if S. Luke's had been the genealogy of S. Mary, no early writer should have known it, especially as the difficulty is frequently mentioned by them.

If therefore we consider *both* as the genealogies of our LORD's reputed father either (1) we may say, with Dean Alford, that reconciliation is impossible for us without data which we do not possess, or (2) we may adopt the reasoning of Lord Arthur Hervey, Bishop Wordsworth, and others, which is not wanting in patristic support, and which sees in S. Luke the human descent of S. Joseph from father to son, and in S. Matthew the official descent through the Jewish kings and (after the Captivity) heirs to the Jewish throne. S. Matthew's genealogy 'exhibits the successive heirs of the kingdom, ending with CHRIST, as Joseph's reputed son. S. Luke's is Joseph's private genealogy exhibiting his real birth as David's son, and thus shewing why he was heir to Solomon's crown.' On this supposition we understand that while the legal descent of Salathiel and of his son Zerubbabel (in which names the two lines converge) passes through the House of Solomon, the literal descent passes through that of Nathan as in S. Luke's Gospel.

The lines again converge in the grandfather of S. Joseph, who is called Matthan by S. Matthew, Matthat by S. Luke, and here again the convergence of the two lines may be explained by supposing the failure of the elder line in the person of Eleazar (S. Matt. i. 15) and the consequent adoption by him of Matthan the son of Levi of the younger line.

The lines then converge for the last time in S. Joseph, who was the adopted son of Jacob (S. Matt.) and the actual son of Heli (S. Luke), both Jacob and Heli being sons of Matthan or Matthat.

That S. Matthew is not professing here to give a literal descent is perhaps further proved by the fact that, according to a common practice with the Jews, he distributes the names into divisions, each containing the same number, which could only be done by abridging in places the number of names (S. Matt. i. 17). It is impossible to say why S. Joseph's genealogy is given when we should have expected S. Mary's: we may notice that both S. Matthew and S. Luke are careful not to imply that our LORD was the son of Joseph, and that both of them only profess to give Joseph's genealogy, not our LORD's; at the same time we are left in no doubt that the Blessed Virgin herself was of the house and lineage of David (Rom. i. 3), and consequently her ancestors may have been the same as her husband's: they certainly were so if the tradition is true that she was married to him as the next of kin (see Num. xxxvi. 6, 8; Ruth iii. 12). There is a statement to this effect as early as S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and it is affirmed by S. Athanasius and other Fathers (see Bishop Wordsworth *in loc.*).

N.B. (1) that the different genealogies given by S. Matthew and S. Luke are strong evidence, among other points, for the independence of the Evangelists of each other; (2) that since both S. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin were descended from David, the genealogy given by S. Matthew from Abraham to David, and by S. Luke from Adam to David, are our LORD's quite as truly *after the flesh*, as they are His as the reputed son of S. Joseph; (3) that it is a



striking fact that no women are mentioned in S. Luke's genealogy and only four by S. Matthew—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba—and that of them, the first was stained by the sin of incest, the second was a harlot, the third a Gentile, and the fourth an adulteress. The Fathers suggest as an explanation that such women are recorded in order to shew that our Lord did not despise a sin-stained race, that 'He was born not to escape our dishonours, but to bear them away' (S. Chrys.), and that they were types of an outcast world recovered from sin and misery and espoused as a Church to CHRIST (see Isaac Williams *in loc.*).

On the question of the genealogies reference may be made to the Article by Bishop Lord A. C. Hervey in the *Dictionary of the Bible* (*s.v.* Genealogy); to Bishop Wordsworth, *Greek Testament* (on S. Matt. i.); to Isaac Williams, *On the Nativity*, pt. i. ch. x.; and to Dean Alford, *Greek Testament* (on S. Luke iii. 23).

# NOTE B. See p. 121

## ON THE HERESIES OF THE ANTE-NICENE PERIOD

The following table summarises the main points in connection with the heresies which troubled the Church before A.D. 325. A similar table by Dr. Bright, summarising the heresies connected with our Lord's Person, has suggested the headings of the subjoined table.

HERESIES CONNECTED WITH	PRINCIPAL HERESIES OF EACH GROUP.	THEIR AIM.	THEIR METHOD.	TRUTHS WHICH THEY DENIED.	CHIEF HERESARCHS AND DATE AT WHICH THEY FLOURISHED.	CATHOLIC OPPONENTS.
i. Creation and the Origin of Evil.	(a) Gnosticism. (b) Manichæism.	The doing away with mystery; the solution of the problem of Evil in the world; and the substitution of KNOWLEDGE for faith.	By formulating theories of Creation by another than the Supreme God, and by teaching the evil of matter.	That 'the world was created by the One Infinite God; that evil is not inherent in matter, but due to the will of responsible creatures'; <sup>1</sup> and that the basis of religion is faith not knowledge.	(a) Simon Magus, c. 60. Basilides, c. 115. Valentinus, c. 140. Marcion, c. 170. (b) Manes or Mani, c. 270. Faustus, c. 380.	(a) S. Irenæus. (b) S. Augustine.
ii. The Being and Nature of God.	(a) Psilanthropism. (b) Sabellianism.	The getting rid, by rationalising methods, of the mystery of the Holy Trinity in Unity.	(a) By denying to the Second and Third Persons co-equality with the First. (b) By reducing the Trinity to modes of manifestation and action.	(a) That 'such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.' <sup>2</sup> (b) That 'there is One Person of the Father, Another of the Son, and Another of the Holy Ghost.' <sup>2</sup>	(a) Theodotus, c. 190. Artemon, c. 200. Paul of Samosata, c. 200. (b) Noëtus, c. 200. Praxeas, c. 200. Sabellius, c. 240.	(a) S. Dionysius of Alexandria. (b) Tertullian, S. Hippolytus.
iii. The Discipline of the Church.	(a) Montanism. (b) Novatianism. (c) Donatism.	The attainment of an ideal purity in the Church, and of an extreme spirituality and freedom.	By a rigid discipline which attempted to pluck up the tares before the Harvest, and, in the case of (a), by an excessive freedom in the exercise of charismata.	That 'in the visible Church the evil is ever mingled with the good'; <sup>3</sup> and in the case of (a), that the Revelation at Pentecost was final.	(a) Montanus, c. 170. Tertullian, c. 180. (b) Novatus, c. 250. (c) Novatian, c. 250. Donatus of Carthage, c. 315.	(a) Claudius Apollinaris. (b) S. Cyprian. (c) S. Pacian. S. Optatus. S. Augustine.

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Westcott, *Religious Thought in the West*, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> Ath. Creed.

<sup>3</sup> Art. xxvi.

## NOTE C. See p. 123

## ON GENERAL AND ŒCUMENICAL COUNCILS

The words 'General' and 'Œcumenical' are often used interchangeably to describe the Councils of universal acceptance in the Church, but they are not really interchangeable terms, for, as Bishop Forbes says, 'though in the strict sense of the term, General, Universal, Œcumenical, are the same, yet the term Œcumenical has been consecrated by usage to mean a "General Council, lawful, approved, and received by all the Church." A Council may be General without being lawful. To be General, all the bishops of the world should be summoned to it, and no one excluded but heretics and excommunicated persons. To be lawful and truly Œcumenical, it is necessary that all that occurs should be done regularly, and that the Church should receive it.'<sup>1</sup> This distinction was evidently in the minds of those who drew up the Twenty-first of the XXXIX Articles; for it is an obvious historical fact that some General Councils have erred and have never become Œcumenical. A Council which is very far from being General, as for example the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, may yet become Œcumenical by its universal acceptance by the Church, whilst on the other hand 'General' Councils, such as those of Ariminum in A.D. 359 and of Ephesus in A.D. 449 (the Latrocinium), never came near to being reckoned as Œcumenical.

As to the number of Œcumenical Councils, whilst there has been practical unanimity with regard to the first six, there has been some uncertainty with regard to the seventh (the Second Council of Nicæa in A.D. 787). Against its œcumenicity is the fact that its decisions were reversed at the Council of Frankfurt in A.D. 794, but on the other hand

<sup>1</sup> Forbes, *Explanation of the XXXIX Articles*, p. 299.

it may be said that the reversal was rather apparent than real; Frankfurt was condemning what Nicæa had not really asserted; and the decisions of Frankfurt itself were reversed by the Fourth Council of Constantinople in A.D. 869. It has always been accepted in the East as the Seventh Œcumenical Council, though, as Bishop Forbes points out,<sup>1</sup> the Greek doctor Barlaam writing in A.D. 1339 only mentions six. It has never been accepted authoritatively by the English Church, which in some of her documents accepts six as Œcumenical, in others only four.

As to the number of Councils accepted as Œcumenical by the English Church, in addition to the first four which she accepts explicitly, she may be said to accept by implication the fifth and sixth, of which her authoritative acceptance seems less decisive, for as a matter of fact the fifth (Constantinople A.D. 553) is Œcumenical mainly because of its confirmation of the four preceding Councils, and the sixth (Constantinople A.D. 680) because it condemned the Monothelite heresy which was merely an offshoot of Eutychianism which was condemned at Chalcedon.

When we pass on to later times, subsequent to the Second Council of Nicæa, we are on very different ground; the Council which comes nearest to œcumenical acceptance is that of Florence in A.D. 1439, but it is far from any such acceptance as has been given to the first six or seven. The superficial reconciliation of East and West at Florence was soon broken, and there was no real consent at the Council itself, and far less afterwards, on matters in dispute between the two great divisions of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> Forbes, *Explanation of the XXXIX Articles*, p. 300.

The Roman Church varies as to the number of the Councils which she considers as Œcumenical, but with the exception of the first seven and with the possible exception of Florence, the Councils accepted by her have never been accepted either by the Holy Orthodox Eastern Church or by the Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury. In view of modern controversies it is well to remember that the Council of Trent, for example, is ignored not less by the Churches of the East than by the English Church.

From what has been said, it will be seen that the uncertain and variable acceptance of later Councils only serves to bring out into greater prominence the œcumenicity of those great Councils which have been accepted without any doubt by the Universal Church in all its parts.

On the Œcumenical Councils, reference may be made to Bishop Forbes, *Explanation of the XXXIX Articles*, Art. xxi. ; Maclear, *Introduction to the Articles of the Church of England*, Art. xxi. ; Church Historical Society, *Lectures*, series II. No. xii.

On the question of the Œcumenicity of the Second Council of Nicæa, see *Church Quarterly Review*, July 1896 ; Sir Wm. Palmer, *Treatise on the Church*, pt. iv. c. ix.

NOTE D. See pp. 137 and 147

#### ON THE PATRIARCHATES

The title of Patriarch as applied to the occupants of the five great sees of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome and Constantinople is an anachronism in its strict sense before the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. The distinctions in the grades of the episcopate were naturally only of gradual growth ; as naturally they followed, though not entirely without exception, the divisions of the Empire.

Thus each of the thirteen great divisions of the Empire called 'dioceses' was presided over by a prefect or count in secular matters, and ecclesiastically by the 'great prelate who in the fifth century was called an exarch, or in the case of a few pre-eminent sees, a patriarch.'<sup>1</sup> Under the exarchs, or, as they were more commonly called in the West, primates, were the metropolitans, who presided over the ecclesiastical divisions corresponding to the provinces into which the civil 'dioceses' were divided; to the civil 'diocese' the ecclesiastical exarchate or patriarchate corresponded, and to the civil province the ecclesiastical province presided over by the metropolitan. Among the exarchs special circumstances led by degrees to the special pre-eminence of certain of them above the rest, and to these the title of patriarch came gradually to be restricted. Already by the date of the Council of Nicæa three great Churches—those of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch—were already for all practical purposes patriarchates. (See Canon vi. of Nicæa.) The Council of Constantinople practically erected the see of Constantinople, which till then had been subject to the Metropolitan of Heraclea, into a patriarchal throne, on the ground of its civil importance as the chief city of the East and the seat of government (Canon vii. of Constantinople); whilst the fifth patriarchate—that of Jerusalem—only obtained the dignity for which it had long been struggling against the Metropolitan of Cæsarea at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451.

The title of Archbishop has no very definite signification during the conciliar period; it seems to have been given as a title of honour and not to have been attached or confined to any particular sees.

On the whole question, see Robertson, *History of the*

<sup>1</sup> Bright, *Notes on the Canons*, p. 88 (ed. 1882).



*Christian Church*, bk. ii. ch. vi. § iii.; Bright, *Notes on the Canons of the First Four General Councils*, Notes on Nicæa vi., on Constantinople iii., on Chalcedon xxviii.; Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 10-23 (ed. 1; in ed. 3, pp. 6-14).

### NOTE E. See p. 162

#### ON THE ANTIOCHENE SCHISM

The fact that S. Meletius, who presided at the Second Œcumenical Council during part of its sessions, was though a maintainer of the true faith yet out of communion with the West, is due to what is known in history as the Antiochene Schism. The events which were the cause of that Schism were as follows. In A.D. 331 Eustathius, Patriarch of Antioch, was deposed from his see, mainly through the intrigues of Eusebius of Cæsarea, and banished by Constantine. After a succession of Arian prelates, Meletius, Bishop of Sebaste, was in A.D. 361 set up by an Arian Council as Patriarch of Antioch. But they had mistaken their man, and Meletius began on the very day of his enthronement to teach the Nicene Faith. The Council, which was still sitting, deposed him, and made the Anomœan Euzoïus Patriarch in his room. There now arose a division among the orthodox, one party accepting Meletius as their bishop, others, the old Eustathian party, holding aloof from him on the ground of his appointment by an Arian Council. The schism might have been healed, had it not been aggravated by the hasty action of a Western bishop, Lucifer of Cagliari, who happened to be in Antioch at the time, and who, in defiance of all ecclesiastical order, took upon himself to consecrate an Eustathian priest, Paulinus, as bishop for the orthodox. Thus Antioch had three bishops—the Arian Euzoïus, and the two orthodox



prelates Meletius and Paulinus. Of these two, the orthodox in the East, with the exception of Egypt, recognised Meletius, Egypt and the West Paulinus. In spite of many efforts to heal it, the schism was continued by the succession of Meletius in A.D. 381 by Flavian, and of Paulinus in A.D. 388 by Evagrius. But the death of Evagrius led to a reconciliation: by the intervention of S. John Chrysostom in A.D. 399, Innocent of Rome and Theophilus of Alexandria both recognised Flavian, and Flavian, on his part, then proceeded to honour the memories of Paulinus and Evagrius by inserting their names on the diptychs of the Church of Antioch.

The great importance of the Antiochene Schism as bearing on the claims of the Papacy will readily be understood when we consider the facts of S. Meletius's presidency over an Œcumenical Council, and of his recognition by the whole Eastern Church, with the exception of Egypt, as Patriarch of Antioch, together with the fact that during the whole of his episcopate he was out of communion with the West. Yet, according to modern papal doctrine, one of the tests of a council's œcumenicity is that it should be presided over by the Pope, whether in person or by legate, and one of the tests of Catholicity is communion with the Roman see. It will be seen that in many respects the English Church is in no better and in no worse case than the great Patriarchate of Antioch and the succession of saintly prelates who presided over it in the fourth century.

See Robertson, *History of the Christian Church*, bk. ii. ch. ii. p. 332, ch. iii. p. 351; Bright, *A History of the Church from A.D. 313 to A.D. 451*, pp. 105, 172; Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, pp. 163-176, pp. 238-266 (ed. 1; in ed. 3, pp. 158-166, 227-372); Gore, *Roman Catholic Claims*, pp. 129-133.

## NOTE F. See p. 163

## ON THE NICENE AND CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREEDS

The enlarged form of the Nicene Creed is first met with in the *Ancoratus* (c. 118) of S. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, a book written in A.D. 373 or 374. There has been much controversy whether this recension was first authoritatively sanctioned by the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, or by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. In favour of the earlier sanction it may be pointed out that (1) the enlarged Creed is appended to some copies of the canons of the Council of A.D. 381; (2) the Council of Constantinople of A.D. 382 stated that the Council of A.D. 381 had put forth a 'Tome,' i.e. a declaration of doctrine; (3) the enlarged Creed was quoted at Chalcedon in A.D. 451 as the Creed of the Council of A.D. 381. On the other hand, it has been urged that (1) Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, in relating the history of the Council of A.D. 381, do not mention that it sanctioned any Creed other than that of Nicæa, and some of their statements appear to imply that it did not; (2) the first canon of the Council of A.D. 381 and the synodical letter of the Council of A.D. 382 refer to the Creed of Nicæa as if it were the only Creed sanctioned by the Council of A.D. 381; (3) at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, the Creed of Nicæa was ratified, but no reference was made to any Creed of Constantinople.

The difference of opinion on this point does not affect the authority of the enlarged Creed, as in any case it has the sanction of the Fourth Œcumenical Council.

Assuming that the enlarged form was sanctioned in A.D. 381, the differences between the Creed accepted by the First Œcumenical Council and the recension which was accepted by the Second and Fourth will best be seen by an arrangement of the two in parallel columns:—

*Nicene*

1. We believe in one GOD the Father  
Almighty,  
And Maker  
of all things visible and invisible ;
2. And in one LORD, JESUS CHRIST,  
The Son of GOD,  
Begotten of the Father, Only-  
Begotten,  
That is, of the Substance of the  
Father,  
GOD of GOD,  
Light of Light,  
Very GOD of Very GOD,  
Begotten not made,  
Of one Substance with the Father,  
  
By Whom all things were made,  
both things in heaven and things  
in earth ;
3. Who for us men and for our salva-  
tion  
Came down,  
And was Incarnate,  
  
And was made Man ;
4.  
  
He suffered ;
5. And the third day He rose again,
6. Ascended into heaven,
7. And He shall come again  
  
To judge quick and dead,
8. And in the Holy Ghost.

*Constantinopolitan*

1. We believe in one GOD the Father  
Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
And of all things visible and  
invisible ;
2. And in one LORD, JESUS CHRIST,  
The Only-Begotten Son of GOD,  
Begotten of the Father before all  
worlds,  
  
Light of Light,  
Very GOD of Very GOD,  
Begotten not made,  
Of one Substance with the  
Father,  
By Whom all things were made ;
3. Who for us men and for our salva-  
tion,  
Came down from heaven,  
And was Incarnate,  
Of the Holy Ghost and Mary  
the Virgin,  
And was made Man ;
4. And was crucified for us under  
Pontius Pilate,  
He suffered,  
And was buried ;
5. And the third day He rose again,  
According to the Scriptures ;
6. And ascended into heaven,  
And sitteth on the right hand of  
the Father ;
7. And He shall come again with  
glory,  
To judge quick and dead,  
Whose kingdom shall have no  
end ;
8. And in the Holy Ghost,  
The LORD, and the Life-Giver,  
Whom proceedeth from the Father,  
Who with the Father and the  
Son together is worshipped  
and glorified,  
Who spake by the Prophets ;
9. In One Holy Catholic and  
Apostolic Church ;
10. We acknowledge one Baptism for  
the remission of sins ;
11. We look for the Resurrection of  
the Dead ;
12. And the Life of the world to come.  
Amen.

(1) As compared with the Nicene Creed, it will be seen

that the Constantinopolitan form differs from it ( $\alpha$ ) by the *omission* of the words 'that is, of the substance of the Father,' of the words 'God of God,' and of the words 'both things in heaven and things in earth' in the second Article; and ( $\beta$ ) by the *addition* of the words 'of heaven and earth' in the first Article; of the words 'from heaven,' 'of the Holy Ghost and Mary the Virgin' in the third Article; of the words 'and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate,' 'and was buried' in the fourth Article; of the words 'according to the Scriptures' in the fifth; of the words 'and sitteth on the right hand of the Father' in the sixth; of the words 'whose kingdom shall have no end' in the seventh; of all that follows the words 'and in the Holy Ghost' in the eighth; and of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth Articles *in toto*.

(2) As compared with the Creed which we are accustomed to recite, it will be noticed that the English form differs from the Constantinopolitan ( $\alpha$ ) by the use of the singular instead of the plural, a peculiarity which we share with the whole West; 'credo' instead of πιστεύομεν: ( $\beta$ ) by the restoration of the words of the Nicene form 'God of God' which are really included in the 'Very God of Very God' of both Nicene and Constantinopolitan forms; this restoration comes into the English form through the later Latin translations: ( $\gamma$ ) by the substitution of the words 'by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary' for the words 'of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary'; this again was a Western change, though both in East and West as many as six forms of this clause are found (see Bright, *Select Sermons of S. Leo the Great*, Note 62): ( $\delta$ ) by the addition of the words 'and the Son' in the eighth Article. This very important addition, famous in history and theology as the 'Filioque,' and the chief

cause of the division between East and West, is first certainly found in the form of the Creed which was recited at the Third Council of Toledo in A.D. 589; it was then formally sanctioned at the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle in A.D. 809, and from that time was gradually adopted by the whole West. It does not necessarily represent a divergence between the theology of East and West, and can be so explained as not to contradict the more exact terminology of the East, but the Western Councils which sanctioned it were certainly acting *ultra vires* in making an addition to a doctrinal statement drawn up and accepted by the whole Church. While it is true to say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, it is yet not untrue to say, if explained in that sense, that He proceeds from Both; on the other hand there was some reason for the fear of the Western councils lest by saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father it should seem that the words of the Son Himself: 'I will send Him unto you' (S. John xvi. 7), and the passages of Holy Scripture which speak of Him as the Spirit of CHRIST (*e.g.* Rom. viii. 9; Acts xvi. 7, R.V.), should be forgotten. The Greeks desired to guard the 'Monarchia' of the Father; the Westerns feared lest the office of the Son should be ignored. But the point is that, apart from the question of right or wrong, so important a doctrinal addition could only be made by an Œcumenical Council. It seems that the theology of East and West might find a meeting-place in the words of S. John of Damascus, which were accepted by the Greeks, as expressing the orthodox faith, with only five dissentients, at the Council of Florence in A.D. 1439. (S. John Damasc., *De Hymno Trisag.*, Ep. 28, Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ Λόγου προῖόν): (ε) by the omission of the words 'in' and

holy' in the ninth Article; the omission of 'in' is common in Western creeds, that of 'holy' was either purely accidental in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI. or else was due to an intentional following of the Third Council of Toledo which inserted the 'Filioque,' and omitted, probably by accident, the word 'holy' as one of the notes of the Church. It may be pointed out that the English Reformers had no intention of omitting the word on principle, since they retained it in the Apostles' Creed.

See Heurtley, *De Fide et Symbolo*, pp. 1-42; Maclear, *An Introduction to the Creeds*, pp. 25-33, 300-306; Bright, *Select Sermons of S. Leo*, Note 62:

On the 'Filioque,' see Forbes, *An Explanation of the XXXIX Articles*, pp. 77-83; Gibson, *The XXXIX Articles of the Church of England*, vol. i. pp. 209-229; Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, pp. 28-30.

### NOTE G. See p. 171

#### ON THE TITLE ΘΕΟΤÓΚΟΣ

The title was not coined during the Nestorian controversy. It had been used as far back as Origen and since him had been used by many others and those of high authority in the Church. The truth for which Cyril contended was the truth that the LORD Incarnate was ONE CHRIST not two, and that therefore the properties of either Nature could rightly be predicated of the ONE PERSON. Because He is ONE, 'it followeth . . . that no person was born of the Virgin but the SON OF GOD; no person but the SON OF GOD baptized, the SON OF GOD condemned, the SON OF GOD and no other person crucified; which one only point of Christian belief, the infinite worth of the SON OF GOD, is



the very ground of all things believed concerning life and salvation by that which CHRIST either did or suffered as man in our behalf' (Hooker, *Laws of Eccl. Polity*, bk. v. lii. 3). Dr. Bright quotes S. Athanasius (*Orat. c. Arianos*, iii. 14, 29, 33), Eusebius (*Vita Constant.* iii. 43), S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech.* x. 9), and Origen (in Routh, *Rel. Sac.* ii. 332) as using the expression.

The fact that the English language, unlike the Latin and the Greek, does not easily admit of the combination of nouns substantive into a single word, makes it difficult, if not impossible, to express the exact significance of the term. 'Mother of God' is not the exact, though it is the only really available, translation of the Greek Θεοτόκος and the Latin *Deipara*; rather it translates the Greek Μητήρ Θεοῦ and the Latin *Mater Dei*, which are much less significant than the familiar Θεοτόκος though they also occur in orthodox writers.

'*Theotocos* has been correctly Latinised into *Deipara*; but can it be said to have found a precise equivalent in English? If it is too much to say that "the common rendering, Mother of God, introduces a new element of thought," we can hardly help feeling that the Greek term, by its very form and sound, gives prominence to the Divinity of Him Who, as Man, was born of Mary; whereas the English phrase begins, so to speak, at the other end, and lays greater stress on the supremely privileged Motherhood. The doctrinal intention is the same in both cases, but the impression produced is not identical. Nor can it be denied that, save to a theologically instructed ear, the fuller phrase is more exacting, at first, than S. Paul's language as to "God's own Blood" in Acts xx. 28, not only because it is more abrupt, but because it seems to assert a derivative



dependence of "God" on a human creature, and the mind has to go over certain points of faith in order to define the true scope of the expression. For all this, the phrase is, for English-speaking Christians, the only practical representative of "Theotocos"; and we must do the best with it that we can. To use it popularly, without due accompanying safeguards, would, as things are, be to court misconception; but with such a paraphrase as that in the first Reformed Liturgy, "Mother of JESUS CHRIST our LORD and God," or with such an explanation as that "the Son of God took our nature upon Him by being born of the Virgin, while He continued to be God," the phrase will assist in the luminous presentation of that supremely precious truth—as precious, one may believe, to Theodoret as to Cyril, Celestine, or Proclus—that we "live by the faith of" an infinite and adorable Redeemer' (Bright, *Waymarks in Church History*, pp. 180, 181).

See also Bright, *Select Sermons of S. Leo*, Note 3.

#### NOTE H. See p. 172

##### ON THE 'COMMUNICATIO IDIOMATUM'

The phrase is used in theology to denote the 'interchange' of the characteristic properties of GODHEAD and Manhood in the One Person of the LORD Incarnate; in virtue of the Personal or 'Hypostatic' Union, as it is called, it is possible to predicate what is human of God, and what is Divine of Man, because God and Man are 'not two but one CHRIST.' As Hooker says, 'for truth of speech it skilleth not whether we say that the Son of God hath created the world, and the Son of Man by His death hath saved it, or else that the Son of Man did create, and the Son of God die to save the

world.' So it is that S. Paul speaks of the 'crucifixion of the LORD of Glory,' and on the same principle we speak of Mother of God, not as meaning thereby that the GODHEAD was born or was crucified, but that He Who was both God and Man, indivisibly, was born and was crucified. 'Because He is God and Man in one Person, therefore all His acts and properties are the acts and properties of that one Person, and may be predicated of God or of Man' (Dr. Bright). This was the great principle affirmed by the Council of Ephesus against Nestorius, whose heresy asserted so entire a separation between the Son of God and the Son of Mary that the acts and properties of the one could in no sense be predicated of the other.

See Bright, *Select Sermons of S. Leo*, Note 5; Hooker, *Laws of Eccl. Polity*, v. liii. 4; Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, Lect. v. p. 261.

## NOTE I. See p. 200

### ON THE CONVOCATION OF GENERAL COUNCILS

The statement of the Twenty-first Article that 'General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes' is merely a recognition of the right which both in Holy Scripture and in the Church has always been conceded to princes, and to which the English sovereign's title of 'supreme Governour' refers—the right of ruling 'all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal.' The Sovereign (as Queen Elizabeth made it perfectly clear) does not thereby claim, nor does the Church recognise, any right of spiritual jurisdiction or legislation, but simply the control of the persons of those who have that

right. The Twenty-first Article was directed against the mediæval claim of the Pope to have the sole right of summoning a General Council; as a matter of fact no one of the seven councils which have any right to the title of œcumenical was convoked by the Pope; as a matter of fact each one of the seven was convoked by the Emperor—

- I. Nicæa, . . . A.D. 325, by Constantine I.
- II. Constantinople, A.D. 381, ,, Theodosius I.
- III. Ephesus, . . . A.D. 431, ,, Theodosius II.
- IV. Chalcedon, . . . A.D. 451, ,, Marcian.
- V. Constantinople, A.D. 553, ,, Justinian.
- VI. Constantinople, A.D. 680, ,, Constantine IV.
- VII. Nicæa, . . . A.D. 787, ,, Constantine VI. and Irene.

#### NOTE J. See p. 210

##### ON THE INCARNATION AND THE FALL

The mysterious question as to the connection between the Fall and the Incarnation was discussed by two great schools of theological thought in the Middle Ages. The Scotists, or followers of Duns Scotus, held that the Incarnation would have taken place whether man had fallen or not; whilst the Thomists, or followers of S. Thomas Aquinas, held that if it had not been for the Fall the Incarnation would not have taken place. There is a great deal to be said on both sides, and since neither Holy Scripture nor the Church has foreclosed the discussion in either direction, it cannot be said that either opinion is wrong. But it may well be questioned whether there is not at least a tendency in such discussions to a speculation on the deep things of God which, however attractive, might ‘in some hands be perilous.’ Whatever might have been if man had not

sinned, the Incarnation for us is conditioned by the fact that he has. ‘Man *has* fallen, and God *has* become Incarnate; that may well suffice until the shadows flee away’ (Bright).

See, on the Scotist side, Trench, *Five Sermons at Cambridge*, p. 10; Westcott, *Epistles of S. John*, pp. 273-315; Illingworth, *Expositor*, series III. vol. iii. pp. 161-175.

And, on the Thomist side, Liddon, *Univ. Sermons*, vol. i. pp. 241, 242 and note; Bright, *Select Sermons of S. Leo*, Note 134; Stone, *Outlines of Christian Dogma*, pp. 54-56.

### NOTE K. See p. 250

#### ON UNCOVENANTED GRACE

The truth that ‘every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights’ (S. James i. 17) makes it clear that all good, wheresoever and in whomsoever seen, comes from God, and is the result of that gracious working without which no good can be. To deny that good outside of the Church is the result of God’s grace is coming very near to the ascription of CHRIST’S Works to Beelzebub. This does not lessen the sin of those who wilfully despise or reject the covenanted channels of God’s grace; grace, as a river, may, and doubtless does, sometimes overflow its banks, but we have no more right to count on its doing so in our case, than to deny the possibility of its doing so, if God so wills, in the case of others.

‘We cannot avoid asking the question: In what relation to this grace do those stand who are outside the action of the Sacraments? The answer to this question, so far as we can give it, lies in the recognition that, according to the old saying, “God is not tied to His Sacraments.” While, on

the one hand, we have no right to expect His grace if we neglect the appointed means for its bestowal, on the other hand we have no right to limit His power to bestow where He sees moral worthiness in this life or beyond it. It will strike many as surprising that the great Jesuit writer De Lugo should recognise, as fully as he does, CHRIST's relation *in grace* to all men ; see *De Myst. Incarn. Disp.* xvii. § 4. He is, he says, the head of all men, by a certain "influxus": "inluit in infideles per vocationes ad fidem et ad alia pia opera." Thus "infideles" are in a certain sense members of CHRIST, *i.e.* "cum voluntarie co-operantur cogitationi datæ per CHRISTUM ad aliquam honestam operationem" (Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, Note 61).

## INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- ADAM, the Second, 9, 71, 89, 246.
- Ante-Nicene Fathers, testimony of, 106-108.
- Antiochene Schism, 264-266.
- Apollinarianism, 158-162.
- Appearance, Incarnation only in, 46, 82.
- Archbishop, title of, 263.
- Arianism, 130-132, 137; attraction of, 141; phases of, 150-151; its apparent triumph, 155; causes of its downfall, 157.
- Athanasius, S., 139; his life and character, 145-149.
- Atonement, the, 205-220; different theories as to, 207-208.
- Authority: precedes Reason, 20; our LORD's claim to, 23.
- BODY, reality of our LORD's, 52.
- CHARACTER of God, progressive revelation of, 5, 6.
- Claims, our LORD's, 22-30, 127.
- 'Communicatio Idiomatum,' 172, 272-273.
- Consensus of teaching, to be appealed to in absence of authoritative formulæ, 105.
- Constantine I.: his conversion, 132; his policy, 133; his death, 153.
- Constantius, 153, 156.
- Consubstantiation, 224, 231.
- Creation, heresies connected with, 259.
- Creed, traces of, in Holy Scripture, 101; Nicene, 139-140; Constantinopolitan, 163; comparison of the two, 266-270.
- Councils: their convocation, 135, 200, 273-274; by whom presided over, 139, 162, 179, 194, 200; œcumenical and general, 260-261; Hooker's summary of their work, 196-197; their lessons, 198-204.
- Cyrenius, enrolment under, 85.
- Cyril of Alexandria, S., 175, 177; his œcumenical letters, 177-178, 180.
- DEATH of CHRIST: a representative act, 211-214; the answer to doubts as to God's justice, 214-218; the vindication of God's Righteousness, 217.
- Definition of great truths, not always possible, 61; forced upon the Church, 119, 199.

Development, in what sense an admissible term, 113-117.

Diocletian, persecution under, 132.

Dioscorus of Alexandria, 192, 193.

Docetism, 46, 52.

Dogmatic statement, why absent in pre-conciliar period, 112-113.

Donatism, 135, 259.

EQUALITY with GOD, our LORD's claim to, 28.

Eucharist, the Holy: as an illustration of the doctrine of the Incarnation, 178, 221; not the subject of ecumenical decisions, 222; as taught in the Prayer Book, 223; reality of inward part, 228-230; of outward part, 230-232.

Eutychianism, 185, 187, 195; violates the Sacramental principle, 231.

Evil, heresies connected with the origin of, 259.

FAITH: used in an objective sense, 97-98; its subject-matter, 99-101; its province in the Eucharist, 225, 232-237.

Fall, the: repaired by the Incarnation, 19, 245-246; its relation to the Incarnation, 274.

Flavian of Constantinople, 192.

Fulfilment of the Old Law, 23.

GENEALOGIES of our LORD, 254.

General Council, what is meant by a, 260.

Gnosticism, 259.

Grace: needing our co-operation, 251-253; outside the covenant, 275-276.

HEBREWS, the Epistle to: its witness to CHRIST, 44, 55-56.

Heresies, Ante-Nicene, 259.

Heresy: its witness to the Incarnation, 109-111; a re-action or an exaggeration, 130.

Heretical temper, warning against, 201.

Holy Spirit, the: His work in the Incarnation, 79-80; in the Eucharist, 227; heresy as to, 157.

Human nature: affected as a whole by the Incarnation, 238-242; and in all its circumstances, 243-245.

Hypostatic Union, the, 272.

IMAGE of GOD, man made in the, 7.

Immaculate conception, the, 74, 116.

Incarnation, the: as the consummation of the past, 2-15; as the recapitulation of humanity, 8-10, 239; as the completion of Revelation, 2-8; as the key to man's being, 10-13; as affecting all life, 238-246; as affecting the individual, 247-251.

Infallibility of the Church, 62.

Infallibility of the Pope, 116, 200.

Invocation of the Holy Spirit in the liturgies, 228.

JOHN, S.: authenticity of his Gospel, 35; his witness to CHRIST, 36-39, 58-59; his silence as to Virgin-Birth, 90-93.

LATROCINIUM, the, 193, 194.



Leo, S., 187; his Tome, 188-191.  
 Liturgies, witness of, 109, 227.  
 Logic, appeal of Arianism to, 131.  
 Love of God, the: shown forth  
 in the Atonement, 213.  
 Luke, S., credibility of, 82-85;  
 his genealogy of our LORD, 254.

MANHOOD, perfection of our  
 LORD's, 49.

Mark, S., the 'interpreter' of S.  
 Peter, 32; Gospel of, 33; silence  
 as to Virgin-Birth, 88.

Matthew, S.: his credibility, 85-  
 87; differences between his  
 Gospel and S. Luke's, 87; his  
 genealogy of our LORD, 254.

Meletius, S., of Antioch, 162, 264,  
 265.

Milan, Edicts of, 134.

Miracles, not arbitrary, 14, 16,  
 76.

Morality of the heathen world,  
 18.

NAME of CHRIST, S. Peter's em-  
 phasis on, 32.

Name of God, the Three-fold, 27.

Nestorianism, 169-170, 175, 180-  
 183; violates the Sacramental  
 principle, 231.

ECUMENICITY, what it means,  
 124-125, 260.

Ecumenical Councils, number of,  
 261; their convocation, 273,  
 274.

Old Testament, morality of, 4.

PAPACY, claims of, 200.

Passion Sunday, service for, 48.

Patriarchates, rise of, 262-264.

Paul, S.: his witness to CHRIST,  
 39-43, 54; his doctrine of the  
 Second Adam, 89.

Perfection, our LORD's claims to,  
 24.

Personality, what is meant by,  
 48, 166-169; our LORD's, un-  
 changed in the Incarnation, 48,  
 71, 72, 166, 238.

Peter, S.: his witness to CHRIST,  
 31-34, 56-57.

Pre-conciliar period, summary of  
 doctrinal history in, 117-121.

Presence, the Real, 64, 224-226.

Propitiation, word used by S.  
 John, 208.

RECAPITULATION of humanity in  
 our LORD, 8-10, 239.

Resurrection Body, our LORD's,  
 233-236.

Revelation, its culmination in the  
 Incarnation, 2-8.

SABELLIANISM, 129, 259.

Science and Theology, 74.

Soul, reality of our LORD's human,  
 53.

THEODORE of Mopsuestia, the real  
 formulator of Nestorianism,  
 175.

Theology, its bearing on persona  
 life, 1, 142, 182, 202.

Theotocos, 171, 270; its English  
 equivalent, 271-272.

Transubstantiation, 224, 231.

UNCERTAINTY, part of our dis-  
 cipline, 63, 125-126, 198.

VIRGIN-BIRTH, the: reasonable

ness of, 69; its moral fitness, 70-72; as a miraculous intervention, 73-77; as a question of evidence, 77-94; its place in the early teaching of the Church, 104-109.

means by the passage in his First Epistle, 59.

Witness, of our LORD to Himself, 22-30; of the Apostles, 30-44; 54-61.

ZUINGLIUS, doctrine of, 224.

WATER and blood, what S. John

# INDEX OF PASSAGES IN HOLY SCRIPTURE REFERRED TO

## I. OLD TESTAMENT

	PAGE
Genesis i. 2, . . .	79
i. 31, . . .	246
ii. 15, . . .	245
ii. 18, . . .	245
iii. 19, . . .	245
Exodus iii., . . .	48
iii. 14, . . .	48
Numbers xxxvi. 6, 8, . . .	257
Ruth iii. 12, . . .	257
Job xiv. 4, . . .	77
Isaiah vi. 5, . . .	24
Jeremiah xxxii. 32, . . .	4

## II. APOCRYPHA

Wisdom ii. 23, . . .	7
----------------------	---

## III. NEW TESTAMENT

S. Matthew i. . . .	88
i. 15, . . .	254, 256
17, . . .	257
20, . . .	78, 79
25, . . .	52
ii. 13, 19, . . .	78
23, . . .	87
iv. 2, . . .	52
v. 21, 27, 31, . . .	
33, 38, 43, . . .	23
vii. 29, . . .	22

	PAGE
S. Matthew viii. 24, . . .	52
ix. 2-6, . . .	26
36, . . .	53
xiii. 58, . . .	233
xxi. 18, . . .	52
xxviii. 19, . . .	27, 97, 117
S. Mark i. 11, 22, 27, . . .	34
13, . . .	53, 64
ii. 5, 10, 28, . . .	34
10, . . .	26
iii. 5, . . .	53
11, . . .	34
iv. 39, . . .	34
viii. 27-29, 38, . . .	34
ix. 2-7, . . .	34
x. 18, . . .	29
21, . . .	53
xiii. 22, . . .	64
26, . . .	34
32, . . .	53
xiv. 22-24, . . .	34
36, . . .	54
62, . . .	34
xv. 34, . . .	54
39, . . .	34
S. Luke i. 1-4, . . .	34
3, . . .	84
30, 35, . . .	79
31, . . .	52

	PAGE		PAGE
S. Luke i. 35, . . .	173	S. John xvi. 7, . . .	269
ii. 7, 21, 40, 42, 52,	52	13, . . .	117
39, . . .	87	xix. 5, . . .	58
48, . . .	94	26, . . .	53
52, . . .	53, 64	28, . . .	52, 58
iii. 23, . . .	52, 88	34, . . .	59
24, . . .	254	xx. 2, . . .	59
v. 20, 23, . . .	26	xxi. 7, 20, 24,	59
vii. 13, . . .	53	Acts i. 14, . . .	83
xxii. 44, . . .	54	15-22, . . .	32
xxiii. 46, . . .	54	21, . . .	57
S. John i. 14, . . .	58, 93	22, . . .	99
45, . . .	94	ii. 14-36, 24, 33, 36,	32
iii. 9, . . .	61	15, 18, 23, 30, 31, 36,	57
13, . . .	172	38, . . .	32, 100
iv. 2, 3, . . .	39	iii. 6, 12-26, 15, 16,	32
6, . . .	52	21, . . .	33
10, . . .	249	22, . . .	57
v. 18, . . .	25	iv. 2, 33, . . .	99
22, 23, . . .	27	8-12, . . .	32
vi., . . .	92	10, . . .	57
33-35, . . .	26	v. 29-32, . . .	32
33, 35, 47, 48, . . .	248	30, . . .	57
viii. 42, 58, . . .	26	31, . . .	33
46, . . .	24	42, . . .	99
46-59, . . .	48	vi. 7, . . .	97
x. 9, . . .	26	x. 34-43, . . .	32
33, . . .	25	36-42, . . .	33
xi. 5, . . .	53	39, . . .	57
25, . . .	26, 27	41, . . .	57, 234
26, . . .	26, 59	xi. 17, . . .	249
52, . . .	8	xvi. 5, . . .	97
xiii. 23, . . .	53, 59	7, R.V., . . .	269
xiv. 1, . . .	27	xvii. 18, . . .	99
6, . . .	26	xx. 28, . . .	172, 272
9, . . .	5, 27	xxii. 16, . . .	100
8-10, . . .	31	Romans i. 3, . . .	54, 257
26, . . .	117	4, . . .	41, 43, 142
xv. 5, . . .	26, 251	v. 15 ff., . . .	249
6, . . .	26	19, . . .	9
23, . . .	27	vi. 3, . . .	100

# INDEX OF PASSAGES REFERRED TO 283

	PAGE		PAGE
Romans vi. 17, . . .	98	Galatians iii. 27, . . .	242
23, . . .	249	28, . . .	239
viii. 9, . . .	269	iv. 4, . . .	54, 55, 80
32, . . .	251	v. 10, . . .	98
ix. 5, . . .	42	vi. 17, . . .	101
x., . . .	42	Ephesians i. 3, . . .	41
xii. 6, . . .	188, 189, 206	ii. 7, . . .	250
xiv. 10, . . .	42	8, . . .	249
1 Corinthians i. 4, 30, . . .	41	iii. 2, . . .	250
23, . . .	41, 99	17, . . .	41
ii. 8, . . .	44, 172	iv. 7-16, . . .	100
v. 4, . . .	41	v. 20, . . .	42
viii. 6, . . .	41	Philippians i. 27, . . .	98
x. 15-21, . . .	100	ii. 5 ff., . . .	55
xi., . . .	42	6, . . .	43
2, 23, . . .	99	7, . . .	43, 54
23-34, . . .	100	8, . . .	210
xii. 3, . . .	122	9, . . .	42
13, 14-27, . . .	100	11, . . .	122
xiii. 12, . . .	63	iv. 3, . . .	251
xv., . . .	42	Colossians i. 15-17, . . .	43
3, . . .	99, 102	16, 17, . . .	37
4, . . .	55, 142	20, . . .	55
8, . . .	41	ii. 9, . . .	43
21, . . .	10	11, . . .	55
22, . . .	9	iii. 15, . . .	100
44, . . .	233	17, . . .	42
47, . . .	9	1 Thessalonians i. 10, . . .	42
2 Corinthians iii. 7 ff., . . .	14	ii. 15, . . .	55
iv. 5, . . .	41	iv. 14, . . .	42
6, . . .	5, 143	v. 23, . . .	53
v. 14, . . .	212	2 Thessalonians i. 6-10, . . .	42
15, . . .	214	1 S. Timothy i. 14, . . .	250
17, . . .	241	15, . . .	24
xi. 4, . . .	99	19, . . .	98
15, . . .	249	ii. 5, . . .	55
Galatians i. 7, . . .	99	iii. 16, . . .	101, 102
23, . . .	98	vi. 10, 21, . . .	98
iii. 1, . . .	206	12, 20, . . .	101
6, . . .	42	2 S. Timothy i. 9, 10, . . .	6
23, . . .	98	13, . . .	98

	PAGE		PAGE
2 S. Timothy ii. 18, . . .	98	1 S. Peter i. 8, 10, 20, . . .	33
Titus iii. 5, . . .	242	ii. 5, 6, 22, 24, . . .	33
Hebrews i. 1, . . .	2	21, 24, . . .	57
3, . . .	60	iii. 18, . . .	33, 57
ii. 9, . . .	56	22, . . .	33
10, . . .	55	iv. 1, . . .	57
14, . . .	56	12, 13, 14, . . .	33
16, . . .	48, 56, 159	2 S. Peter i. 15, . . .	118
iv. 14, . . .	60	1 S. John i. 1, . . .	59, 229
15, . . .	49, 55	ii. 2, . . .	208
v. 1, 2, . . .	55	22, . . .	110
7, 8, . . .	55	iv. 2, . . .	59
vi. 1, . . .	102	3, . . .	59, 110
20, . . .	44, 60	10, . . .	208
vii. 16, . . .	44	v. 1, 10, . . .	39
viii. 3, . . .	56	6, . . .	59
ix. 12, 24, . . .	60	2 S. John 7, . . .	59
15, . . .	56	S. Jude 3, . . .	114
x. 12, . . .	44	Revelation i. 5, . . .	61
19, 20, . . .	60	ii. 5, . . .	11
xiii. 20, . . .	56	v. 6, . . .	61
S. James i. 17, . . .	275	xii. 1, . . .	80
ii. 1, . . .	44	xix. 13, . . .	39
1 S. Peter i. 2, 11, 19, . . .	33, 57		

## INDEX OF COUNCILS, AUTHORS, AND BOOKS REFERRED TO

NOTE.—*The date is not added to the name of a living author.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Aix-la-Chapelle, Council of</i>, A.D. 809, 269.</p> <p>Alexander, W., D.D., Archbishop of Armagh, 58, 84, 92, 93.</p> <p><i>Alexandria, Council of</i>, c. A.D. 320, 137.</p> <p>Alford, H., D.D., Dean of Canterbury, century xix., 82, 83, 88, 258.</p> <p>Ambrose, S., Bishop of Milan, century v., 29.</p> <p>Andrewes, Lancelot, D.D., Bishop of Winchester, century xvii., 12, 64, 207, 221.</p> <p>Anselm, S., Archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor of the Church, century xi., 220.</p> <p><i>Ariminum, Council of</i>, A.D. 359, 154, 260.</p> <p>Aristides, Christian apologist, century ii., 109.</p> <p><i>Arles, Council of</i>, A.D. 314, 135.</p> <p>Articles, The XXXIX, century xvi., 68, 174, 224, 232, 259.</p> <p>Athanasius, S., Archbishop of Alexandria, century iv., 18, 37, 257, 271.</p> <p>Augustine, S., Bishop of Hippo, Doctor of the Church, century v., 20, 250.</p> | <p>BALFOUR, A. J., 206.</p> <p>Bengel, J. A., century xviii., 208.</p> <p>Bernard, S., Abbot of Clairvaux, century xii., 209.</p> <p>Bernard, J. H., D.D., Archbishop King's Lecturer in Divinity in the University of Dublin, 101.</p> <p>Bright, W., D.D., Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, century xix., 16, 30, 50, 141, 144, 145, 148, 160, 172, 175, 177, 188, 237, 263, 264, 265, 270, 272, 273, 275.</p> <p>Brightman, F.E., M.A., Librarian of Pusey House, Oxford, 228.</p> <p><i>Chalcedon, Council of</i>, A.D. 451, 21, 46, 68, 194.</p> <p>Church, R. W., D.C.L., Dean of S. Paul's, century xix., 13, 147, 246.</p> <p><i>Church Historical Society</i>, 135, 262.</p> <p><i>Church Quarterly Review</i>, 65, 262.</p> <p>Claudius Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, Christian apologist, century ii., 120.</p> |
|--|---|



*Constantinople, Council of, A.D.* 381, 161.

*Constantinople, Second Council of, A.D.* 553, 197, 261.

*Constantinople, Third Council of, A.D.* 680, 197, 261.

*Constantinople, Fourth Council of, A.D.* 869, 261.

Cyril, S., Archbishop of Alexandria, century v., 221.

Cyril, S., Archbishop of Jerusalem, century iv., 271.

DALE, R. W., LL.D., century xix., 213, 217, 218, 219.

*Dictionary of Christian Biography*, 145.

*Dictionary of the Bible*, 35, 88, 258.

*Diognetus, The Epistle to*, century ii., 120.

Du Bose, W. P., D.D., Professor of Exegesis and Moral Science, University of the South, 203.

*Ephesus, Council of, A.D.* 431, 179.

*Ephesus, Council of, A.D.* 449, 193, 260.

Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, century iv., 132, 271.

FELIX, Mgr., century xix., 31.

*Florence, Council of, A.D.* 1439, 261, 262, 269.

Forbes, A. P., D.D., Bishop of Brechin, century xix., 105, 125, 260, 261, 262, 270.

*Frankfurt, Council of, A.D.* 794, 260, 261.

GELASIVS, S., Bishop of Rome, century v., 237.

Gheste (or Guest), Edmund, Bishop of Rochester, century xvi., 225.

Gibbon, Edward, historian, century xviii., 146.

Gibson, E., D.D., Vicar of Leeds, 270.

Gore, Charles, M.A., Canon of Westminster, 18, 20, 28, 30, 36, 75, 85, 86, 88, 89, 106, 107, 109, 210, 265, 275, 276.

Gregory Thaumaturgus, S., Bishop of Neocæsarea, century iii., 257.

Gwatkin, H. M., M.A., Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Cambridge, 145.

HAMMOND, C. E., M.A., Vicar of Menheniot, 109, 228.

Hefele, C. J., Bishop of Rothenburg, century xix., 200.

Hervey, Lord A. C., D.D., Bishop of Bath and Wells, century xix., 88, 258.

Heurtley, C. A., D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, Oxford, century xix., 108, 270.

*Homilies, Books of*, century xvi., 223, 236, 261.

Hooker, Richard, M.A., Master of the Temple, century xvi., 96, 148, 196, 243, 246, 249, 250, 271, 273.

Horatius Flaccus, Q., Roman poet, 15.

Huxley, T. H., century xix., 75.

IGNATIUS, S., Bishop of Antioch, century ii., 107.

- Illingworth, J. R., M.A., Rector of Longworth, 247, 275.
- Irenæus, S., Bishop of Lyons, century ii., 8, 108.
- JEROME, S., Doctor of the Church, century v., 156.
- John of Damascus, S., century viii., 269.
- Justin Martyr, S., Christian apologist, century ii., 109, 120, 225.
- KEBLE, John, M.A., Vicar of Hursley, century xix., 45, 222.
- Kingsley, Charles, M.A., Rector of Eversley, century xix., 12.
- LEO, S., Bishop of Rome, century v., 21, 47, 50, 188.
- Liddon, H. P., D.D., Canon of S. Paul's, century xix., 8, 18, 25, 35, 36, 37, 51, 58, 103, 207, 273, 275.
- Lightfoot, J. B., D.D., Bishop of Durham, century xix., 35, 43, 98, 106.
- Lugo, de, Cardinal, century xvii., 276.
- MACCOLL, M., D.D., Canon of Ripon, 103, 168, 238.
- Maclear, G. F., D.D., Warden of S. Augustine's College, Canterbury, 100, 262, 270.
- Martensen, Hans, Bishop of Sjælland, Primate of Denmark, century xix., 72.
- Melito, Bishop of Sardis, Christian apologist, century ii., 120.
- Milligan, W., D.D., Professor of Divinity, University of Aberdeen, century xix., 80, 234.
- Milman, W. H., Dean of S. Paul's, century xix., 67.
- Minucius Felix, Christian apologist, century ii., 120.
- Moore, Aubrey, M.A., Dean of Divinity, S. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford, century xix., 207, 216.
- NEWMAN, J. H., D.D., Cardinal, 11, 49, 166.
- Nicæa, Council of*, A.D. 325, 138.
- Nicæa, Second Council of*, A.D. 787, 260, 261.
- ORIGEN, Christian apologist, century ii., 271.
- PAGET, F., D.D., Dean of Christ Church, 3.
- Palmer, Sir William, century xix., 262.
- Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, century ii., 32.
- Pearson, John, D.D., Bishop of Chester, century xvii., 80.
- Puller, F. W., M.A., Mission Priest of the Society of S. John, Cowley, 117, 139, 162, 194, 200, 264, 265.
- Pusey, E. B., D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, century xix., 117.
- QUADRATUS, Bishop of Athens, Christian apologist, century ii., 120.
- RAMSAY, W. M., M.A., D.C.L., 84, 85.
- Robertson, J. C., M.A., Canon of

- Canterbury, century xix., 112, 263, 265.
- SALMON, George, D.D., Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, 90.
- Sanday, W., D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, 35, 83.
- Satterlee, H. Y., D.D., Bishop of Washington, 82, 85.
- Stone, D., M.A., Principal of Dorchester Missionary College, 65, 270, 275.
- TEMPLE, F., D.D., Archbishop of Canterbury, 226.
- Tertullian, Christian apologist, century ii., 101, 108, 120.
- Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, century v., 245.
- Toledo, Council of*, A.D. 589, 269.
- Trench, R. C., D.D., Archbishop of Dublin, century xix., 17, 182, 275.
- VAUGHAN, C. J., D.D., Master of the Temple and Dean of Llandaff, century xix., 42.
- Venantius Fortunatus, century vi., 205.
- Vincent of Lerins, S., century v., 105, 115, 116.
- WATKINS, H. W., D.D., Archdeacon of Durham, 35.
- Wesley, Charles, M.A., century xviii., 183.
- Westcott, B. F., D.D., Bishop of Durham, 2, 35, 55, 92, 93, 102, 241, 243, 247, 259, 275.
- Williams, Isaac, B.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, century xix., 258.
- Wordsworth, Christopher, D.D., Bishop of Lincoln, century xix., 88, 244, 258.

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